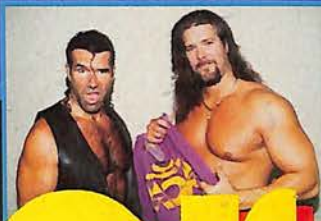


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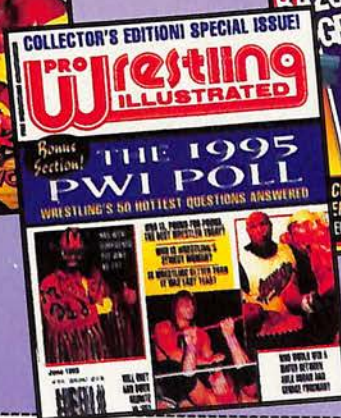
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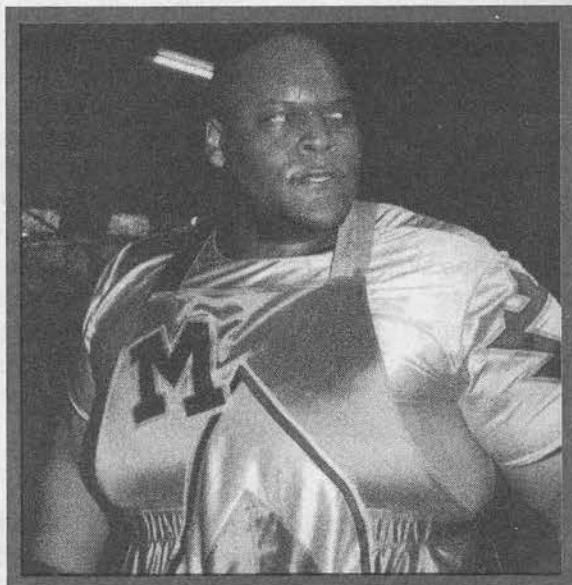
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THE Wrestler

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YOUR Letters

POOR PAGE

It's too bad that the editors of *The Wrestler* cannot give a "Thumbs Down" to World Championship Wrestling in the "Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down" section. WCW deserves this dubious honor for denying "Diamond" Dallas Page a championship match at the Great American Bash after he won the "Lord Of The Ring" battle royal at Slamboree. WCW said that since Page's feet touched the floor after he was thrown over the top rope, he should have been eliminated. If WCW was really concerned about this type of controversy, there would have been more than one referee assigned to officiate this battle royal in the first place.

In my opinion, WCW made up a phony excuse for keeping Page out of the main event of the Bash to hide the real reason: money. Page vs. The Giant is an obvious

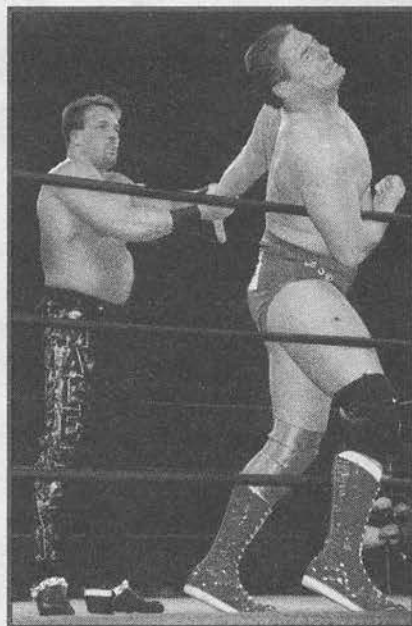
mismatch on paper. The Giant would easily defeat Page, a mid-card wrestler, and fans would be disappointed. Notice that WCW conveniently gave Page's title match to Lex Luger, a man who is far more popular and poses a greater challenge to The Giant.

WCW should have realized that this type of event could have been won by an underdog, especially considering the randomly drawn tag team combinations. "Diamond" Dallas Page was wrongfully penalized by WCW for being a mid-card wrestler who had a career night.

JOHN CORCORAN
Morristown, NJ

ACCELERATING THE EXPLOSION

Dave Rosenbaum's article "Odds Are ... The WCW Tag Team Scene Is About To Explode!" (July 1996) was great, but



Marcus Bagwell twists the wrist of Lord Steven Regal. The American Males could well have been added to the list of the top WCW tag teams in our July 1996 analysis, notes Eric Jenkins.

it didn't even tell half the story. The truth is that there are 11 tag teams in the WCW that are capable of taking the titles from Sting and Lex Luger, and that includes six former WCW tag champions, like The American Males. There are also three more regular teams, like the Barrio Brothers, capable of an upset in any given match. The most surprising thing is that not only are the champions talented enough to hold the titles for a long time, but none of these 15 teams features Arn Anderson, the best tag team wrestler in the federation.

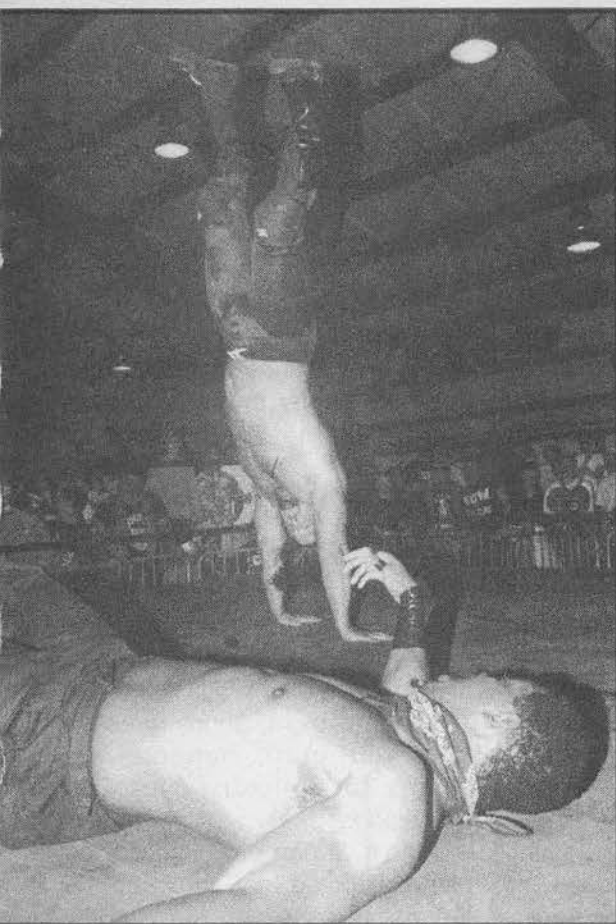
ERIC JENKINS
Hawthorne, CA

ELIMINATE THE COMPETITION

It's great to see that The Eliminators are starting to get the



Dallas Page (at rear) was unjustly stripped of his Slamboree battle royal victory and deprived of his rightful shot at the WCW World championship, protests John Corcoran. WCW, John writes, simply was not comfortable with a Page vs. Giant matchup for the Great American Bash.



John Kronus utilizes his gymnastics background to launch an unorthodox attack on Mustafa Saed. Kronus and partner Perry Saturn are, in Stacey Matisen's view, every bit as good today as The Road Warriors were in the '80s.

credit they deserve. In my opinion, John Kronus and Perry Saturn are possibly the best team to enter the tag team rankings since The Road Warriors steamrolled their way through the AWA and NWA in the mid-1980s. Their combination of sensational athletic ability, raw power, and blood-thirstiness will carry this team well into the next century. Okay, so they sometimes do things to women like Francine that make women's support groups throw back their heads and howl, but she shouldn't get in their way.

Kronus and Saturn are the future of wrestling. I think it would be great to see these guys run rampant over both the WWF and WCW teams, including the former kings of terror, The Road Warriors. They already have proved themselves better than the other

teams in ECW. Now they need to move on and conquer others.

STACEY MATISEN
Willow Grove, PA

GIANT PRAISE

While everyone from Sid Vicious to The Ultimate Warrior has been labeled "the next Hulk Hogan," only one man can fill Andre the Giant's considerable shoes: The Giant.

Unlike Hogan's faulty heirs, The Giant has the ability to even outshine the great Andre. I can't remember watching someone with so little professional experience winning the WCW World title. In truth, wrestling with and against veteran wrestlers like Randy Savage, Ric Flair, and the "Hulkster" has given The Giant a huge amount of experience.

WCW is brimming with talent, but the

biggest star there is The Giant. With his size and ability, even Andre would have to look up to see all that The Giant can accomplish in wrestling.

MATT WITTMAN
Waterloo, IL

HUNKY HOOPLA

What's with all the hoopla over Shawn Michaels? The whole wrestling world is acting like this teenybopper pretty boy is the greatest thing to hit pro wrestling—oh, excuse me, sports entertainment—in this century. Isn't everyone jumping the gun a bit?

"The Heartbreak Kid" doesn't deserve a fraction of the attention he is getting! Shawn has only held the WWF World title for a few months and still has a heck of a

(Continued on page 50)

THE Wrestler

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WHAT'S

Happëning

By Bill Apter

SUNNY IS THE proud manager of the new WWF World tag team champions, **The Smokin' Gunns**.

If you had read that line a few months ago, you would have asked me what the joke was. Well, it's no joke. Thanks to Sunny, the Gunns have the belts for a third

time. If you think that's amazing, well, you probably found the events leading up to this union to be downright bizarre.

Frustrated after her **Bodydonnas**, **Skip** and **Zip**, lost the belts to **Henry** and **Phineas Godwinn**, Sunny convinced Phineas to let her co-manage the Godwinns along with their usual manager, **Hillbilly Jim**. That didn't set well with Jim or Henry, but since Phineas signed a legal document making Sunny his co-manager, there was nothing anyone could do about it.

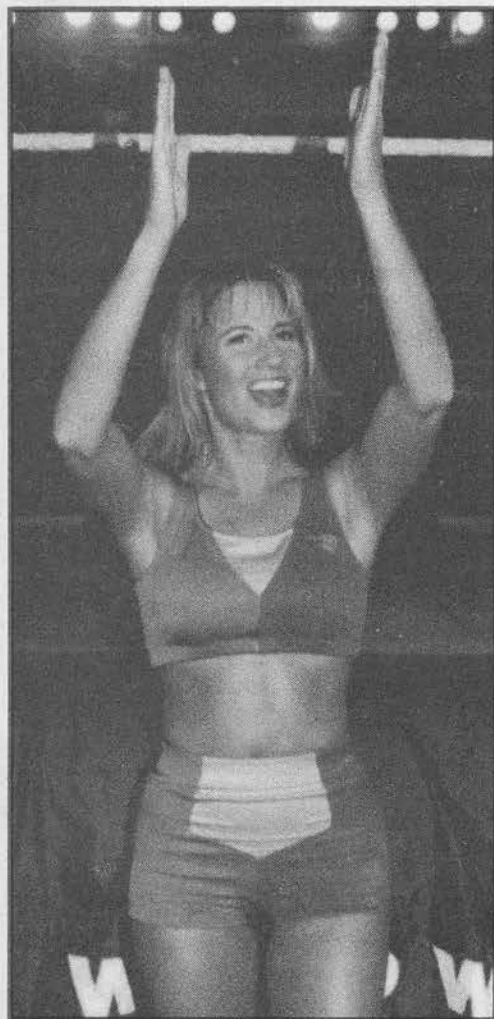
Just a few days later, Sunny happily walked to the ring with the Godwinns for their match against the Gunns at *In Your House VIII*. During that match, with the Godwinns holding an early advantage, **Billy Gunn** decided to distract Phineas,

who was in the ring with **Bart**. Billy grabbed Sunny in his arms and began kissing her (she never attempted to pull away). Phineas was shocked when he saw that because he still believes Sunny loves him. As he watched in amazement, they kept kissing, and Bart snuck up behind Phineas, suplexed him, and pinned him!

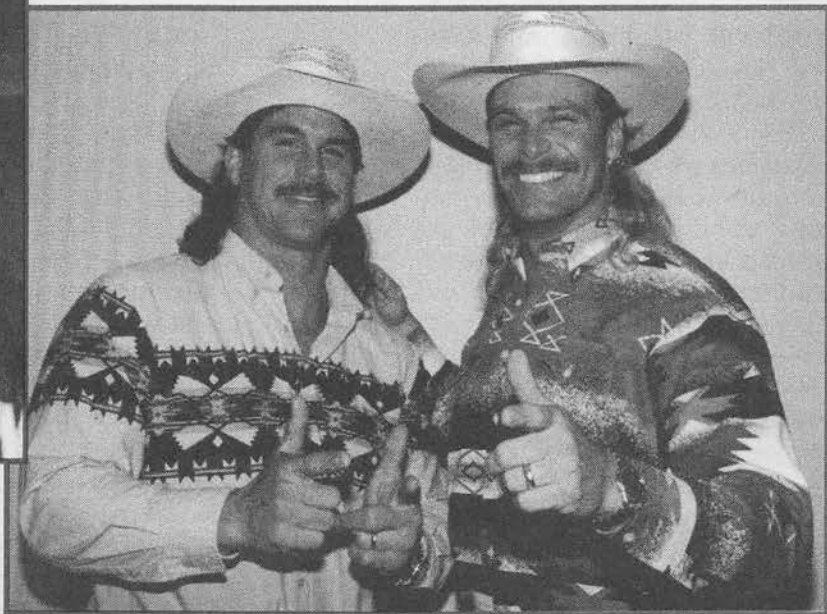
The next night, Sunny, dressed in cowgirl garb, managed the Gunns to a victory over The Bodydonnas!

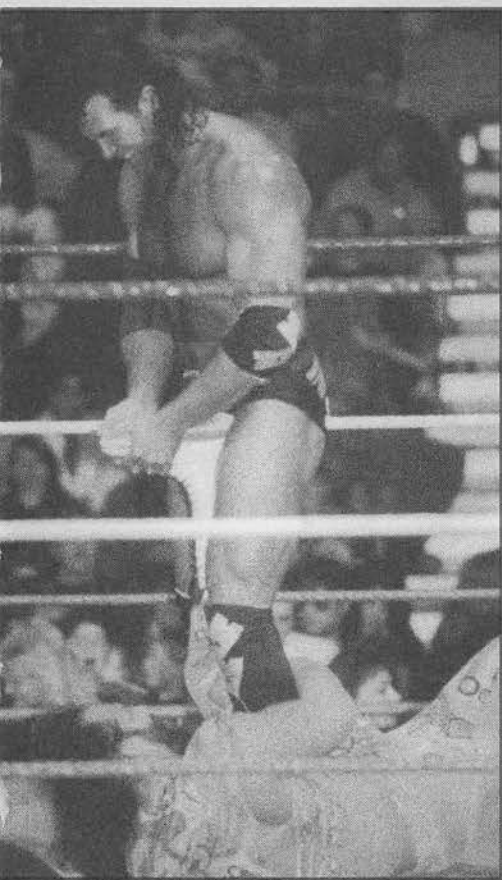
Was it all part of a complicated plan concocted by Sunny and the Gunns. In case you forgot, Billy had planted a few kisses on Sunny's lips during some of the Bodydonnas-Gunns matches held early in 1995.

"Sunny rhymes with money," she told me a few hours after appearing with the Gunns for the first time. "I stay with winners; they're the only



Who would have thought it could ever happen—Sunny (above) cheering for and managing The Smokin' Gunns (right)? Thanks to Sunny, Billy and Bart won their third WWF World tag team title. Skip and Zip are not happy about it.





An old WWF feud could be rekindled in WCW soon. Razor Ramon has returned to WCW and is acting very much like a rulebreaker. Perhaps he'd like some more matches with Randy Savage.

Mauler and Doll to stop wrestling and leave. Razor then grabbed a microphone, insulted **Eric Bischoff** and a few others, and asked where "The Nacho Man" and "Billionaire Ted" were.

Later in the evening, he came face to face with Bischoff and told him, "If you want a war, I'll give you a war." In essence, Razor seemed to be saying that he was representing the WWF in the WWF-WCW war. **Diesel** was expected to appear in WCW shortly after Ramon, and we understand that Razor is trying to enlist help in WCW from his former WWF ally **Lex Luger**.

Jerry Lawler and **Bill Dundee's** multi-year love-hate relationship is definitely back on the love side again. The two of them won the USWA tag team belts from **The**



Jerry Lawler has had some interesting things to say to the people in Memphis recently. Namely that he doesn't really care about them anymore. He does, however, care about winning titles and making money.

Cyberpunks, but the decision to team with Dundee cost Lawler the support of his fans in Memphis.

(Continued on page 52)

people you'll find me with. Get lost, Apter. *You are a loser!*"

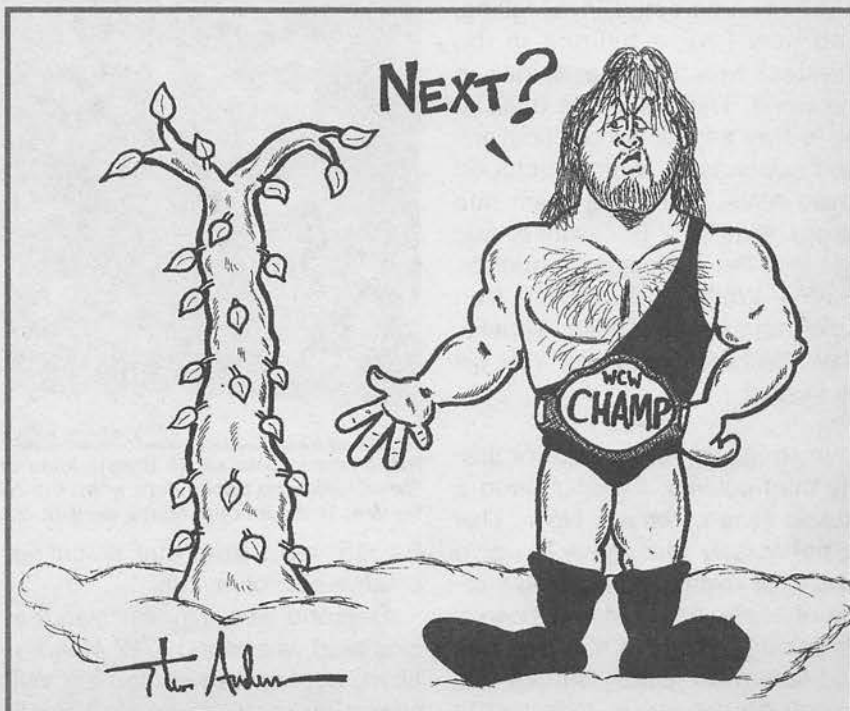
I got Skip and Zip's take on what happened shortly after I spoke with Sunny.

"She has had some psychological problems recently," Skip said. "This is just a passing thing. Her psychiatrist told us to leave her alone, or she'll crack. He feels that she'll realize what's happening soon and come back to us."

"Yeah and we have a contract with her that says she's not allowed to manage anyone else," added Zip. "We're just being nice to her and following her shrink's orders right now, but we're not happy."

Razor Ramon made his return to WCW in a way that got everyone's attention. During a televised match between **The Mauler** and **Steve Doll** on May 27, Razor made his way from the stands to the ring, prompting a confused

Steve Anderson's View



NO Holds Barred

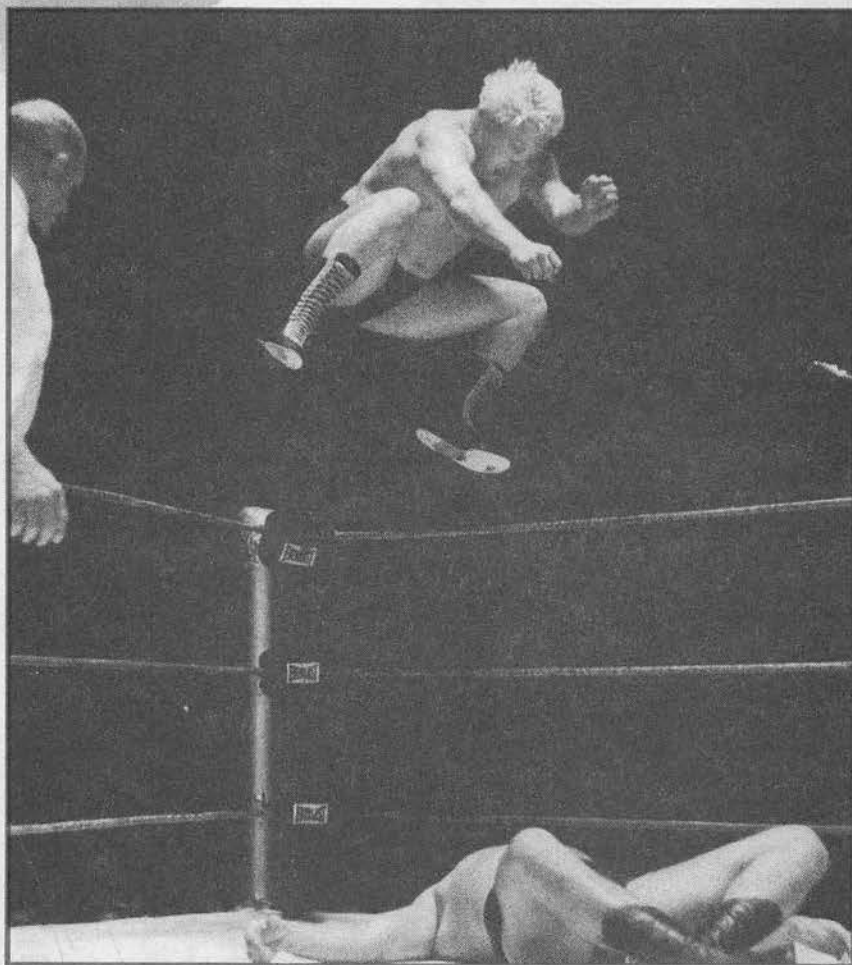
with Steve Anderson

I WOULD BE remiss if I didn't acknowledge the passing of "Crippler" Ray Stevens on May 3. Stevens holds significance for me because my first vivid memory of wrestling involved him. While he was wrestling Dr. X in a televised AWA match, Stevens climbed to the top rope and dropped his knee on his opponent, breaking X's leg. That incident prompted the long-time ban of off-the-top-rope moves in the AWA and, eventually, in some other promotions.

That event, in a roundabout way, has also led me to this point. It got me interested in wrestling, and now I have bylines in the greatest wrestling magazines in the world. This column is dedicated to Ray and all his contributions and successes, which included three AWA World tag team title reigns with Nick Bockwinkel and one with Pat Patterson, in addition to NWA World tag reigns with Ivan Koloff and Jimmy Snuka. Thanks, Ray. We hardly knew ye. You will be missed.

...

In struggling for an idea for this, my third column, I encountered a classic case of writer's block. This is not to say that there is not a wealth of events in wrestling worthy of analysis. There has been a veritable plethora of title changes and federation jumps. But not one event could jar a "No Holds



Ray Stevens gets set to drop a knee on Waldo Von Erich during a 1962 match. Steve Anderson remembers when the AWA banned moves from the top rope after Stevens broke an opponent's leg with one. "The Crippler" died in May.

Barred" topic from that so-called creative side of my brain.

Deadline time. I'm watching the inaugural two-hour *WCW Monday Nitro*, hoping that something will shake the cobwebs loose. Then it

happens. The Wrestler Formerly Known As Razor Ramon enters a WCW ring and begins to berate the promotion. He even makes reference to Vince McMahon's satiri-

(Continued on page 53)

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By
Andy
Rodriguez

IT'S EASY TO admire a wrestler like Arn Anderson. You may not agree with his philosophy or his tactics, but you have to admire his toughness, courage, and skill. For the past decade, Anderson has been one of the sport's top competitors.

But he has also been a man caught in conflict. He prides himself on following his heart and always doing what he believes to be right. On the other hand, he is tied by loyalty to one man: Ric Flair. It is, therefore, difficult to regard Anderson as being completely independent. He is often too willing to forgo personal glory to advance Flair's interests.

The latest example of this occurred at Slamboree. Anderson was paired with Eddy Guerrero at Battlebowl. Their opponents were Flair and Randy Savage. For a while, it looked like Anderson was really trying to win. Then he DDT'd Guerrero. That allowed Flair and Savage to advance in the tournament.

It is very likely that Anderson and Flair had a deal worked out beforehand, that they agreed Arn would sacrifice his own best interests to help Flair.

"Arn will do anything for Flair," said Bobby Eaton, a former partner of Arn. "He'd go to the ends of the earth for that man."

The Flair-Anderson bond was forged, of course, during their early days as members of The Four Horsemen. Flair was NWA World champion more often than not then. Anderson was "The Enforcer." His role was very clear.

"Everybody else in the Horsemen, no matter how well they did on their own, had one job: to protect Ric Flair," recalled ex-Horseman Tully Blanchard. "Flair was always obsessed with having us make him look good. Arn just took it to heart more than anyone else."

He took it to heart despite his own success (he has won five NWA/WCW World tag team titles and four NWA/WCW TV titles). Most men with such a record would crow about their own greatness. Anderson crowed about Flair's greatness.

"He was always willing to give Flair credit

for everything the Horsemen did," said Ole Anderson. "He said there wouldn't be a team if it weren't for Flair's leadership. He took pride in his own accomplishments all right, but always by giving due to Flair."

When Flair left WCW for the WWF, however, Anderson didn't fold. On the contrary, he thrived. It finally seemed as though he would break out from Flair's shadow. At least it seemed that way.

"Arn was still always talking about the Horsemen," said another ex-Horseman, Barry Windham. "He always hoped that Flair would come back and everything would be like it used to be. He was fueled by that belief."

It was no surprise, then, that when Flair did return, Anderson was right there for him. And although the newer versions of the Horsemen didn't last very long and were not as successful as any of their predecessors, it was established that Anderson definitely was a Flair man.

The question is: Why is Anderson still so loyal to Flair?

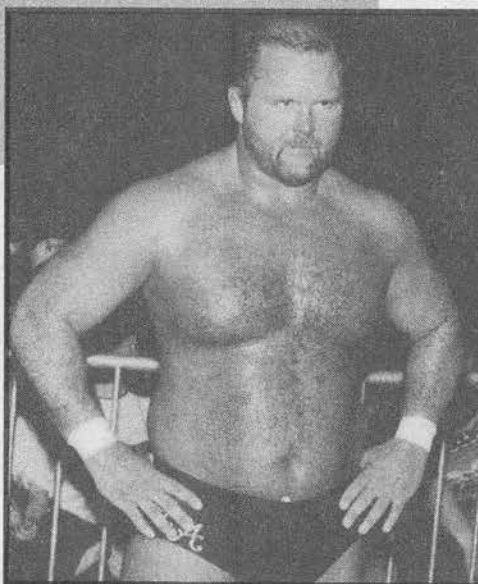
"Arn's smart," Ole said. "He knows you can go a long way tying yourself to somebody like Flair. I don't think there's any doubt that some of his greatness rubbed off on Arn."

There is also a more personal reason: Arn Anderson admires Ric Flair greatly.

"Arn is a rough-and-tumble guy," said Windham, "while Flair projects a glamorous image. I think a part of Arn wishes he could be like Flair. He wishes he had what it takes to win as many world titles as Flair has."

He may not be an all-time great like Flair, but Anderson has a terrific amount of talent. He is good enough to win the WCW World championship. He is good enough not to have to devote his career to Flair. Several months ago, he admitted he had a difficult choice to make: Would he continue to protect Flair, or would he try to make good on a promise he made to his family years ago, a promise in which he vowed to be the first Anderson to win a world heavyweight title.

It is clear that he has made his choice. Let's hope for his sake that he doesn't regret it someday.



Arn: Self-sacrificing to a fault

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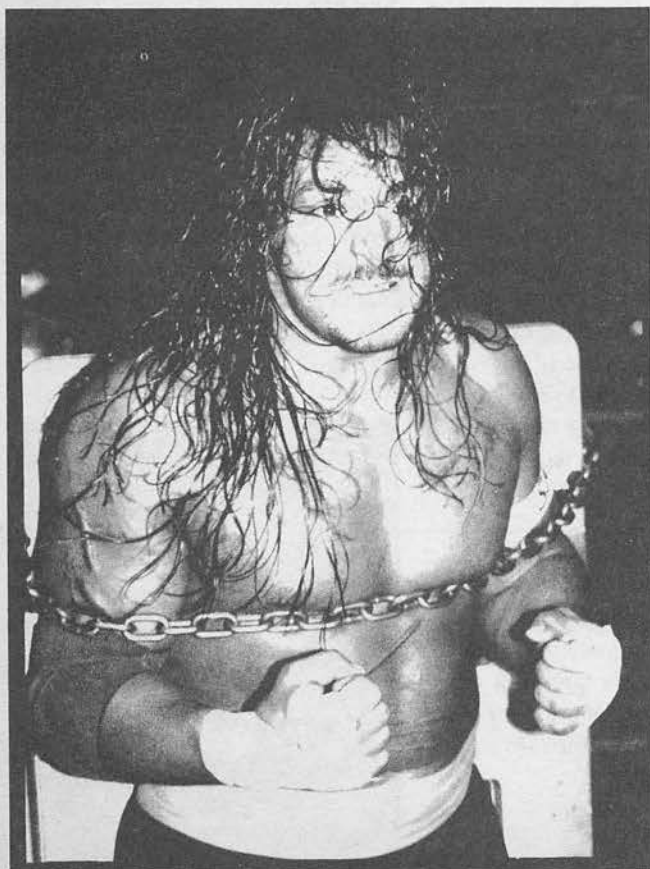
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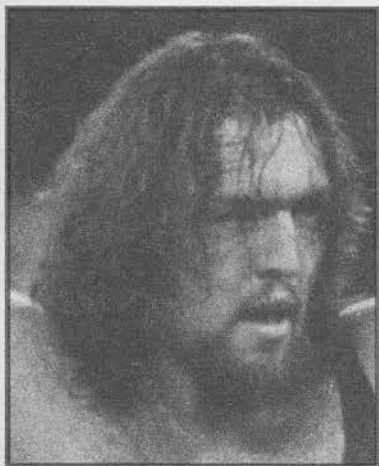
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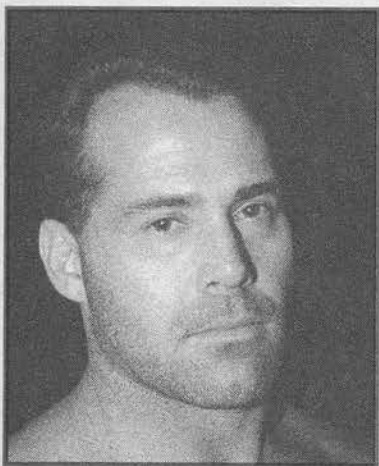
T H U M B S **Up**



Thumbs Up to The Giant. The Giant had already followed in Hulk Hogan's footsteps by winning the WCW World heavyweight title. Now he has followed the "Hulkster" all the way to Hollywood by landing a part in the movie *Reggie's Prayer*. The film, which will also feature many NFL stars, is in production now and is sure to increase The Giant's marquee value. The best part about this is that yet another wrestler—see Sting, Roddy Piper, and Andre the Giant—is viewed as marketable by the outside world, proving once again that wrestlers are the most multi-faceted athletes in the world.

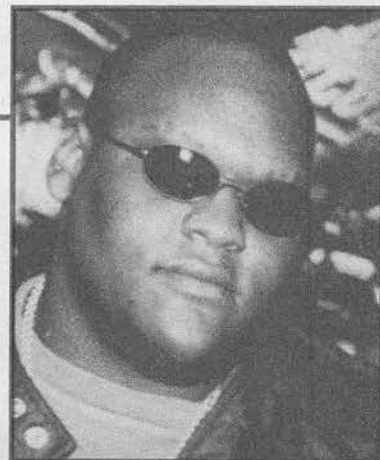
Thumbs Up to The Ultimate Warrior. As the big men take center stage this month, we give a hearty ovation to the Warrior for his impressive comeback after a 3½-year layoff. No, we're not talking about the Warrior's easy victory at WrestleMania XII. We're talking about the Warrior's series of victories over Big Van Vader, one of the most feared and impressive wrestlers in the world. Warrior's undefeated record since returning looks awfully good when you look at

the list of the men he has conquered. Maybe this time, Warrior is finally on his way to dominating the sport again and giving the WWF another superstar that it badly needs.



Thumbs Up to Dean Malenko. That's right, he rather quietly won the new WCW cruiserweight title by beating Shinjiro Otani in May. Most wrestlers would think so much of such an accomplishment that they'd be bragging about it for weeks, or maybe months, on end. Not Malenko. He has never been one to do a lot of talking. Maybe that's why he's such a great wrestler. He spends most of his free time working out and studying tapes. It's only a slight exaggeration when WCW broadcasters call him "The Man Of 1,000 Holds." We're sure Malenko will bring class to this new title. He doesn't need to tell everyone how skilled he is. He shows them.

Thumbs Up to Mabel. On page 46 of this issue, you'll read of Mabel's tearful confession, "I did Mo wrong!" It takes a very big man—and we're not talking about size—to admit a mistake, and Mabel realized he inadvertently turned his back on a lifelong friend by concentrating so much on his singles career. It's rare these days that a wrestler considers friendship more important than stardom and money. For once, Mabel has set a great example for everyone. We're looking forward to the rapid reaccession of Mabel and Mo, wrestling's Men on a Mission.



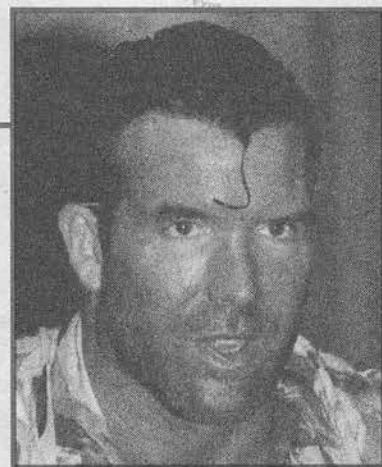
THUMBS Down



Thumbs Down to Jeff Jarrett. There aren't too many ways for a lighter weight wrestler to beat Big Van Vader. Getting very lucky is one. Cheating, according to Jarrett, is another. But it didn't work when Jarrett pulled out a chain to hit Vader during a USWA match this May. Vader reacted quickly, wrested the chain from Jarrett, and used it on "Double-J." Justice wasn't quite served when Jarrett pointed out to referee Joe Wheeler that Vader used the chain, and the decision was reversed. We suggest that the next time Jarrett even thinks about getting into the ring with Vader, he figures out a new plan of attack.

Thumbs Down to Razor Ramon. Exactly what is the "Bad Guy" doing showing up on WCW TV and insulting WCW Senior Vice President Eric Bischoff by calling him a "Ken doll lookalike"? Was Ramon really sent to do business by WWF heads? No—he showed up in WCW *after* his WWF contract had expired. This was not the proper way for him to return to WCW anyway. He didn't need to interrupt a match on *Nitro* and start spouting off about "Billionaire Ted," "The Nacho Man," and "Scheme Gene." He

should have shown some class, worked out an agreement with WCW matchmakers, and come back on their terms. Looks like the old rulebreaking Ramon has returned.



Thumbs Down to Sunny. Having used her body to get the WWF World tag team title for The Bodydonnas, she did it again on behalf of The Smokin' Gunns, sort of (see "What's Happening" on page 6 for details). In doing so, Sunny left behind Skip and Zip—although we're a bit suspicious in this regard—and once again left Phineas Godwinn high and dry. The sad thing is that Sunny's a brilliant woman with the potential to rise above the usual managerial garbage, but she is taking the same route followed by her many male peers. We hoped Sunny would change the way female managers are viewed, but it looks as if she's just like the rest.

Thumbs Down to Curt Hennig. A disturbing trend has developed in the WWF in which former wrestlers become referees or officials and proceed with biased behavior. First we had Gorilla Monsoon and Roddy Piper, and now there's Hennig. "Mr. Perfect," who, due to back problems, isn't been able to wrestle, officiated a series of WWF matches between Jerry Lawler and Razor Ramon this spring and prevented Ramon from using his "Razor's Edge." This allowed Lawler to use a foreign object and defeat Ramon. We have news for Hennig: The "Razor's Edge" is legal; foreign objects are not. It's unconscionable that Hennig was not at least fined.



CORRESPONDENTS

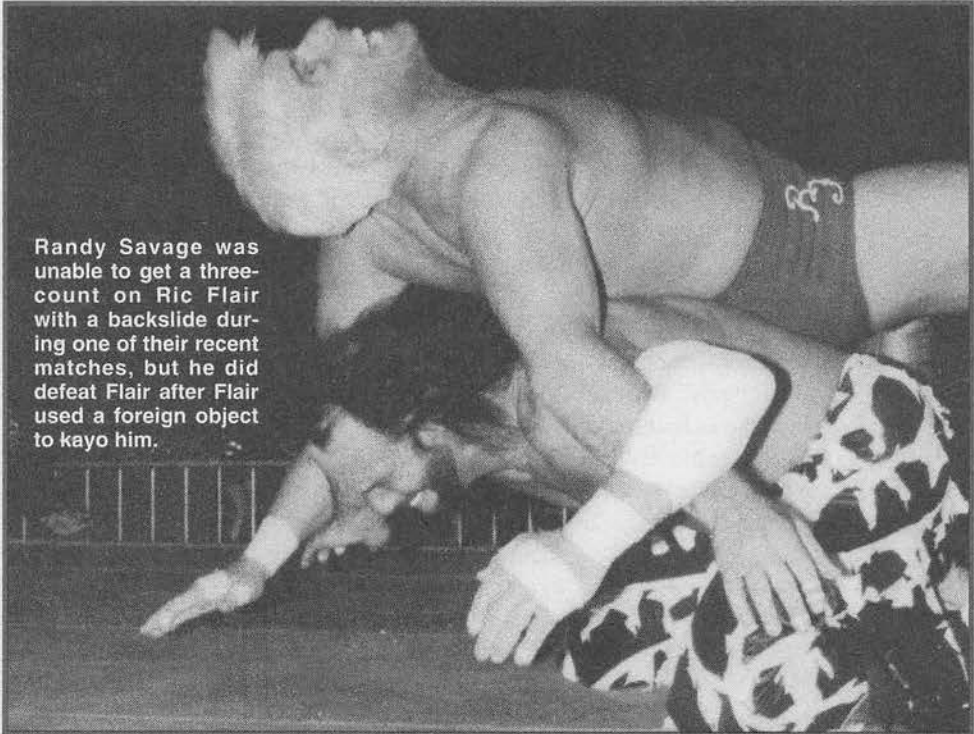
Repörrts

Johnson City, TN
(Correspondent—Paul Garrelts): After all Ric Flair has done to make Randy Savage's life miserable during the last year, it's hardly a surprise that Savage is anxious to pummel the "Nature Boy" any chance he gets.

He didn't wait for the bell when he faced Flair on this night. As Flair was being introduced, the "Macho Man" jumped him. Somewhat unexpectedly, a decent portion of the crowd was actually pro-Flair. Savage was too busy to notice. He pounded Flair repeatedly with his fists as he backed him into the corner. On several occasions, Flair had to retreat to ringside to get a break.

At one point, he tried to leap onto Savage from the top rope, but Savage prevented him from doing so and slammed him to the mat. He also knocked Flair to the mat with a series of clotheslines. After getting a series of two-counts, the "Macho Man" started to get too aggressive for the referee's taste, and he attempted to hold him back.

That gave Flair the chance to pull a foreign object out of his tights and nail Savage with it. He got a three-count after that, but when the referee raised Flair's hand, the object fell to the mat. As



Randy Savage was unable to get a three-count on Ric Flair with a backslide during one of their recent matches, but he did defeat Flair after Flair used a foreign object to kayo him.

Flair and the official argued about it, Savage rolled up his opponent from behind and got a three-count himself while hanging on to Flair's tights.

In other bouts: Alex Wright pinned Disco Inferno ... The Nasty Boys defeated Public Enemy in a streetfight when Brian Knobs pinned Johnny Grunge ... The Booty Man pinned Arn Anderson ... Chris Benoit pinned Eddy Guerrero ... WCW TV champ Lex Luger beat Hacksaw Duggan ... WCW World champ The Giant beat Sting by disqualification.

Chicago, IL (Correspondent—Adam Leyritz): Chaotic is probably the best word to describe the

AAA tag team match pitting Konnan and Perro Aguayo against Pierroth and Cien Caras. It wasn't supposed to be a lumberjack match, but many of the wrestlers on the undercard came to ringside and made it one.

A ladder was thrown into the ring about five minutes into the bout, and Pierroth happily rammed Konnan's head into it. Metal stairs and a tripod also got into the ring. Juventud Guerrera, one of the "lumberjacks," then attempted to leap off the stairs and onto Konnan, but Konnan caught him in mid-air and power-bombed him.

Aguayo was eventually cut, though that didn't affect him

(Continued on page 54)

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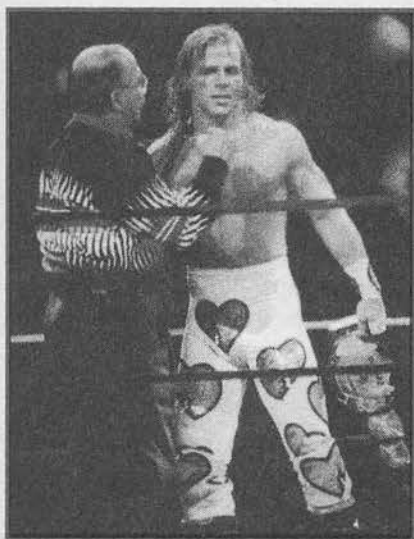
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YOU Asked Us



Jose Lothario still helps Shawn Michaels with his training, so it's not that surprising that he predicts Shawn's WWF title reign will be a long one. One thing he vows not to do is help Michaels by interfering in his matches.

Q: "I have some questions for Jose Lothario: Given that there are so many heartless and cruel wrestlers in the WWF right now, do you think Shawn Michaels' title reign could last a year or more? Also, if you saw a manager or wrestler trying to interfere against Shawn, would you try to stop him?" —Jose Jimenez, New York, NY

A: "The competition in the WWF at this time is as tough as it's been in a long time," said Lothario, "but I know in my heart that Shawn is ready to hold this belt for a long time. Physically, he's at his best, but just as importantly, he is mentally sharp. He knows he must

pace himself in each match, because if even if he beats a tough man one night, there will be another one waiting for him the next night. You say these WWF wrestlers are heartless, and that might be true, but Shawn knows everyone is after him and will do what it takes to stop them. He knows what it's like to be a hungry contender. Look how long it took him to win the WWF belt. He knows how his challengers feel. He's very focused. To answer your other question, no, I will not get physically involved in Shawn's matches. He asked me not to. He is always prepared for interference on the other side anyway."

...

Q: "This question is for either Rick or Scott Steiner: How did it feel to be wrestling each other at Slamboree during the 'Lethal Lottery' portion of Battlebowl? Would you have been willing to do anything to beat each other that night?" —Neil Holden, Fresno, CA

A: "I think I can answer for both me and my brother on this one," said Scott Steiner. "It felt really strange. We're both so competitive that we almost couldn't help but go at each other full tilt, but it didn't feel right. I never want to be in that situation again, because I know a lot of the people watching were wondering whether there

really were some bad feelings between us. They were probably hoping some kind of feud would start, but that ain't gonna happen. I almost felt like I was holding back a little against Rick that night, and he probably did, too. There's a lot more I want to accomplish before my wrestling days are over, but I want to do it with my brother. There'll never come a day when I'll do anything to make him look bad in the ring. I'd rather retire than do that."

...

Q: "My question is for Bull Nakano: I saw where you wrestled Madusa (Continued on page 56)



Bull Nakano and Madusa (a.k.a. Alundra Blayze) resumed their old WWF rivalry in WCW. Nakano plans to follow Madusa wherever she goes in order to keep proving that she is superior to Madusa.

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Stan Hansen won the AWA World title by defeating which champion?

- 1) Rick Martel
- 2) Nick Bockwinkel
- 3) Curt Hennig
- 4) Verne Gagne

The largest crowd ever to witness a pro wrestling show (190,000) was in what city?

- 1) London, England
- 2) Toronto, Ontario
- 3) Pyongyang, North Korea
- 4) Tokyo, Japan

True or False: Hulk Hogan is the only wrestler to appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated

- 1) True
- 2) False

Which of the following cities did NOT host a portion of WrestleMania II?

- 1) Chicago, Illinois
- 2) Atlantic City, New Jersey
- 3) Uniondale, New York
- 4) Los Angeles, California



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Introducing

By Dave Lenker

"WISEGUY" JIMMY CICERO

IVAN KOLOFF ADMITS that the first time he saw "Wiseguy" Jimmy Cicero walk into his wrestling school in Indian Trail, North Carolina, in 1993, he did a double-take.

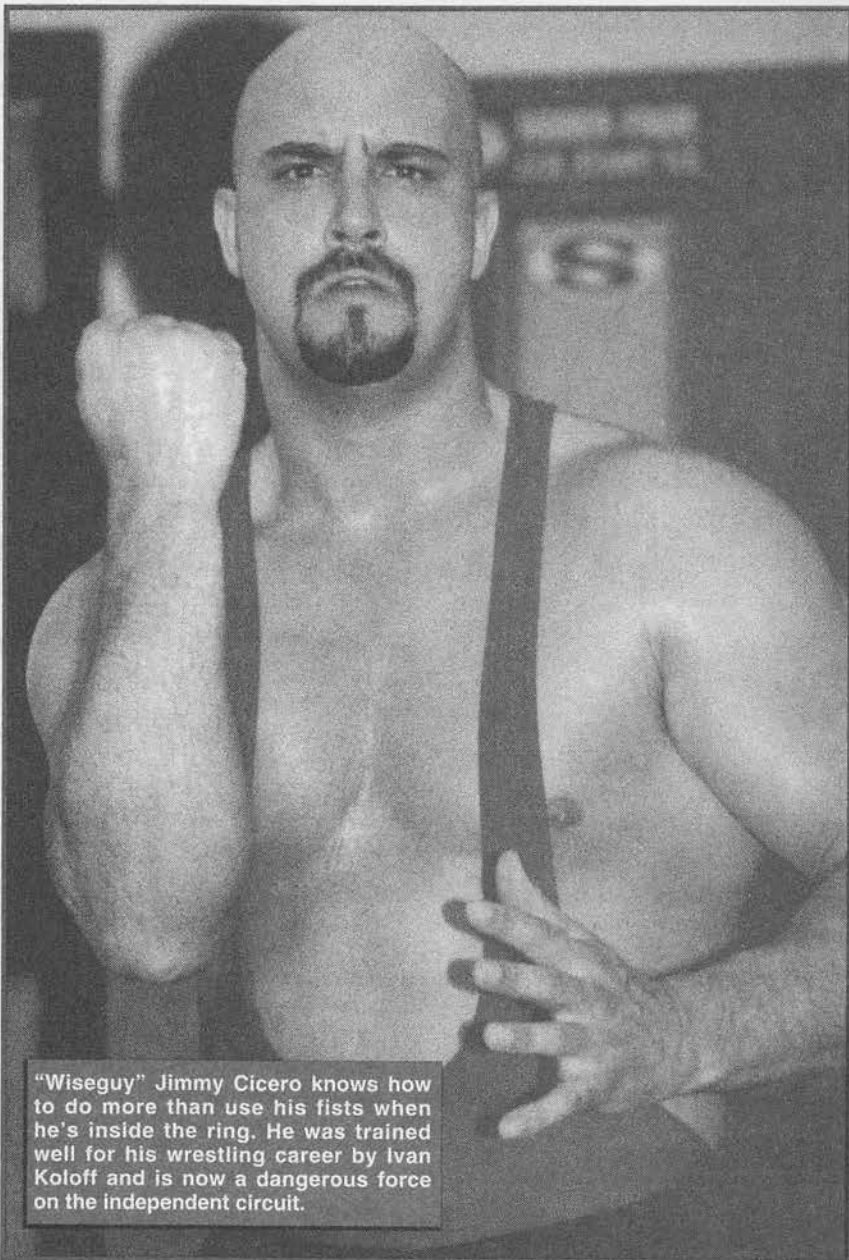
The cleanly shaven head, the swagger, the red tank top, the goatee, the *presence*. He was suddenly transported back a decade or so. He knew he was looking at a man he had never met, but in Cicero, Koloff saw his nephew Nikita, a man he helped train for a brilliant career in the NWA.

"Was very strange," recalled Koloff. "He look very much like Nikita. I know it wasn't him, but it feel strange. People I know told me was good athlete, that I should train him. When I see him, something told me I had to do it."

And so the wrestling career of "Wiseguy" Jimmy Cicero officially began. A 6'1", 235-pound native of New York City, Cicero always dreamed of becoming a professional wrestler, but he didn't know how to get involved in the sport. Fortunately, he became friendly with a man at his gym who knew Koloff. The friend convinced him to meet with Koloff. "The Russian Bear" immediately liked what he saw.

"We hit it off great," said Cicero. "We got in the ring together the first day I was at the school, and he told me I had a lot of natural talent. He taught me a lot about chain wrestling and mat wrestling. You know, the old style. He says that you have to learn the basics before you get too fancy."

Oddly enough, Koloff did not try



"Wiseguy" Jimmy Cicero knows how to do more than use his fists when he's inside the ring. He was trained well for his wrestling career by Ivan Koloff and is now a dangerous force on the independent circuit.

Ivan Koloff may have trained Jimmy Cicero, but this young man has a style that's all his own. Even some very famous veterans have good things to say about the "Wiseguy"

to mold Cicero into an Ivan Koloff clone, but instead said Cicero could learn something by watching wrestlers like Bob Backlund and Brad Armstrong, two men with whom Koloff feuded.

"Even those two American pigs do some things good in ring," said Koloff. "Jimmy Cicero is about same size, so he can be like them, only much tougher."

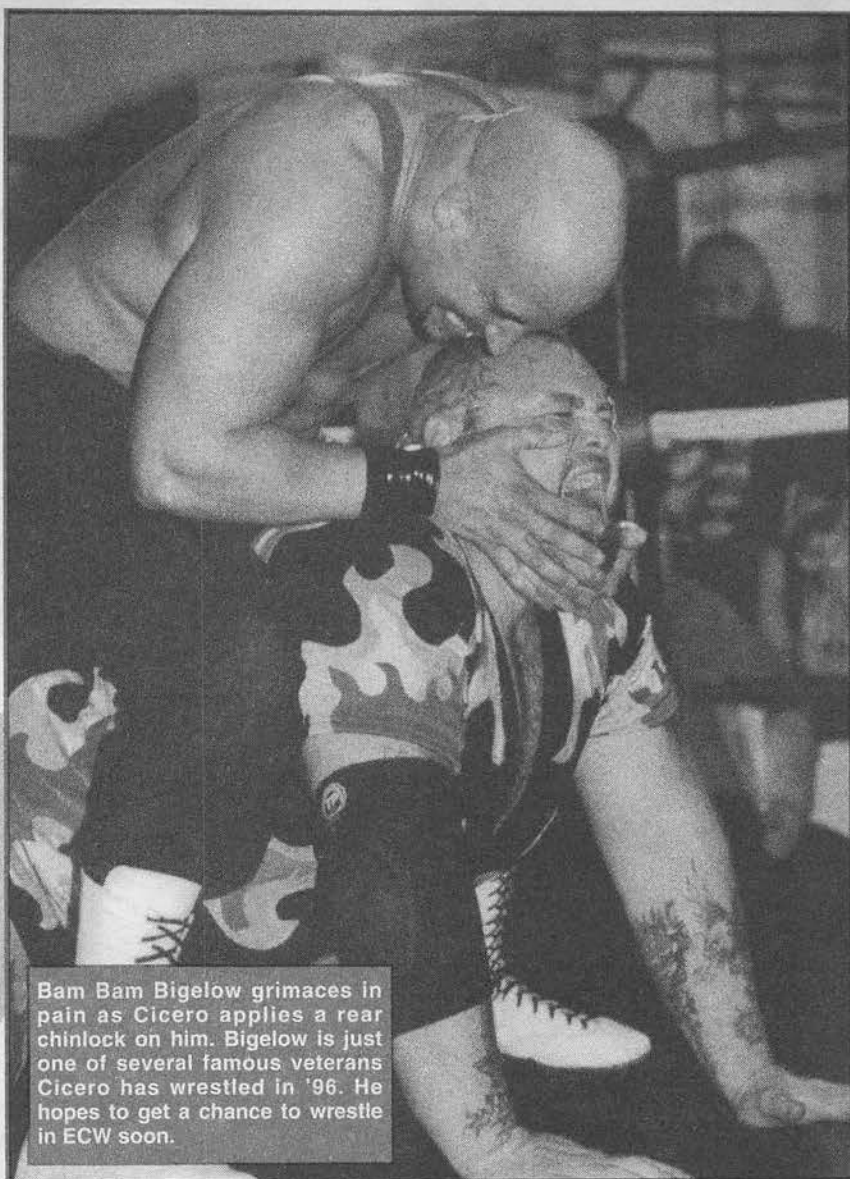
After three months of intense training, Cicero was ready to make his pro debut. By the end of 1993, Cicero and Steve Storm, who also trained under Koloff, were tag team champions of the Carolina Championship Wrestling Alliance. A few months later, they traveled to Virginia Beach and won the Continental Wrestling Association tag team belts from Eric East and Brian Perry, the same duo they had beaten for the CCWA title.

All the while, though, Cicero, then a fan favorite, kept in touch with Koloff, who warned him that he must always wrestle for himself, not the fans. Koloff's message finally got through to Cicero while he and Storm were competing in Southern Championship Wrestling. For no apparent reason, he turned against Storm during a tag team match and formed an alliance with former rival Perry. He has been a rulebreaker ever since.

"I just got tired of carrying the guy," Cicero explained. "I single-handedly won those tag team titles for us. I didn't need him. He needed me, but he never did anything to help my career."

Shortly thereafter, Cicero decided he wanted to wrestle in more tough singles matches, and that is just what he has gotten in the last year. Cicero now competes primarily in the Independent Pro Wrestling Alliance in Virginia and has looked good there in matches with Bam Bam Bigelow and Jim Neidhart.

"Tough kid," Bigelow said of Cicero. "He has good all-around skills and a lot of confidence. He definitely has the potential to be a



Bam Bam Bigelow grimaces in pain as Cicero applies a rear chinlock on him. Bigelow is just one of several famous veterans Cicero has wrestled in '96. He hopes to get a chance to wrestle in ECW soon.

star someday."

"He never gives up," added Neidhart. "You can't let up on him for even a second if you plan on beatin' him."

In addition to wrestling in the IPWA, Cicero is also competing in SCW and in the Maryland-based MEWF, where manager Royce Prophet recently hired him as the bodyguard for one of his young charges, Steve Corino. Cicero already has his sights set on Boo Bradley, who recently broke away from Prophet's camp.

"That bum can't even dream about being in my league," said Cicero. "He's a brawler, that's it. There are so many different ways I could beat him."

He may be right about that.

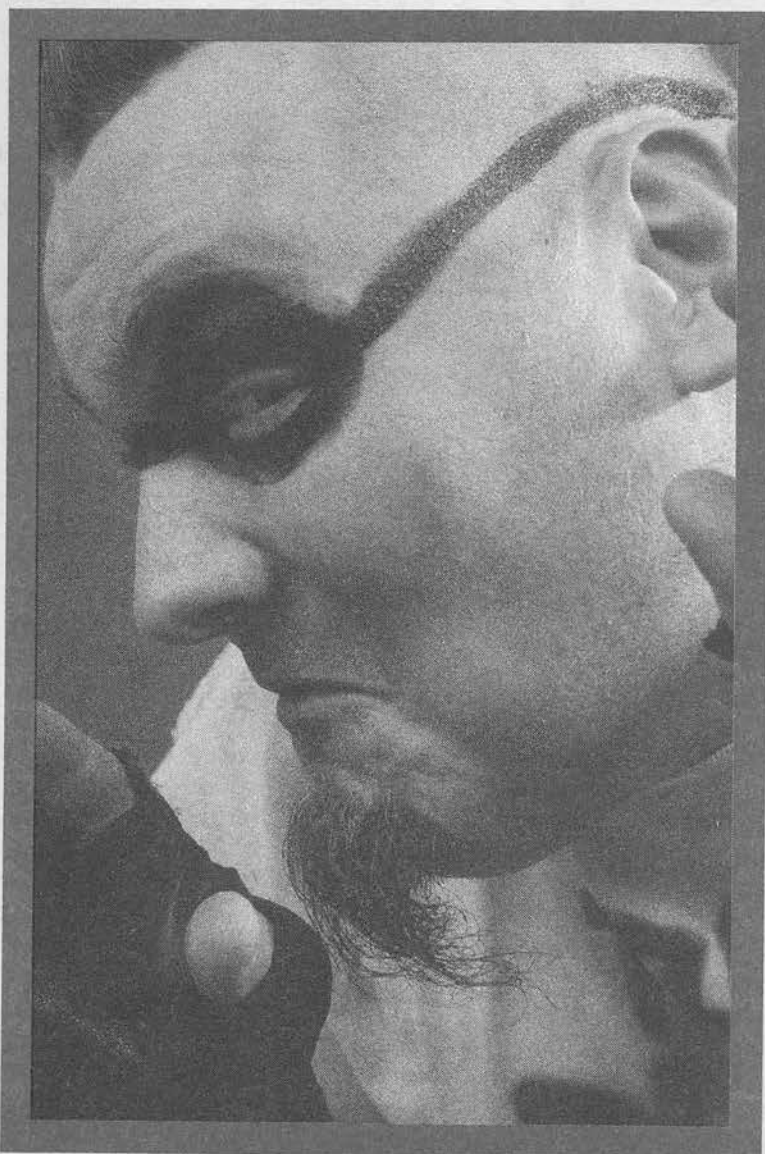
Ivan Koloff taught him a lot about mat wrestling, but Cicero has added to his repertoire in the last few years by incorporating several impressive aerial moves into his arsenal. In addition, he is quite proud of his superplex, his finisher of choice in most of his matches.

As for the long-term future, Cicero hopes to someday join ECW. He has befriended several of the ECW stars who compete occasionally in the MEWF and would love it if they'd put in a good word for him with ECW promoters.

Until that happens, though, he'll be content to wrestle in as many independents as possible, get as much experience as possible, and collect more titles.

Sounds like a wise plan. □

THE BLUE MEANIE



IN A SPORT known for its off-beat characters, perhaps none is more unusual than The Blue Meanie. This 6'1", 350-pound man has blue hair, painted-on black glasses, a blue goatee, and bills himself from Pepperland. Where's Pepperland? It's the location of The Beatles' fantasy **The Yellow Submarine**.

Is this guy weird or what?

Meanie's clique includes Stevie Richards, Brian Lee, and Raven, and he even has a "Meanie Babe" named Patricia. Richards and Meanie do a mean imitation of Diesel and Shawn Michaels, respectively, right down to Shawn's "Sexy Boy" dance. Only in ECW.

The Blue Meanie rarely wrestles these days and seems more focused on his goal of ruling the universe. That's right—The Blue Meanie wants to oversee us all. It's high ambition for a man who walks around with a Thighmaster exercise machine he claims was given to him by Suzanne Somers.

And The Blue Meanie always refers to himself in the third person. He's The Blue Meanie to you and to himself. "I" isn't in his dictionary.

Confident but hardly cognizant of reality, The Blue Meanie is staking his claim to weirdness in ECW. Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum sat down with him and later called it "the strangest experience of my life. And I've met Dynamite Lady."

And The Blue Meanie says he has no idea who Shawn Michaels is! He could have fooled us. He does a great impression of Shawn's "Sexy Boy" dance. Female fans don't go wild when he does it, though.



there's this whole thing with you and Stevie Richards doing a Shawn Michaels/Diesel posing routine. Now what's that all about?

A: Who is Shawn Michaels? Who is Diesel? The Blue Meanie never heard of them.

Q: Come on. Richards wears those dark glasses and acts ...

A: What's the matter—do you think there's only one pair of dark glasses in this world. The Blue Meanie is sure there are dark glasses all over the universe! He has been all over the universe!

Q: But it's not just that. You do the Michaels dance ...

A: The Blue Meanie likes to dance.

Q: And there's a striking similarity between the way you act when you step into the ring and the way Shawn Michaels acts, but you're a little heavier than him ...

A: Who cares about this? Please. You and The Blue Meanie should talk about

Q: I've heard it said that in ECW, a federation known for its off-beat characters, The Blue Meanie is the most off-beat of all. How do you react to that?

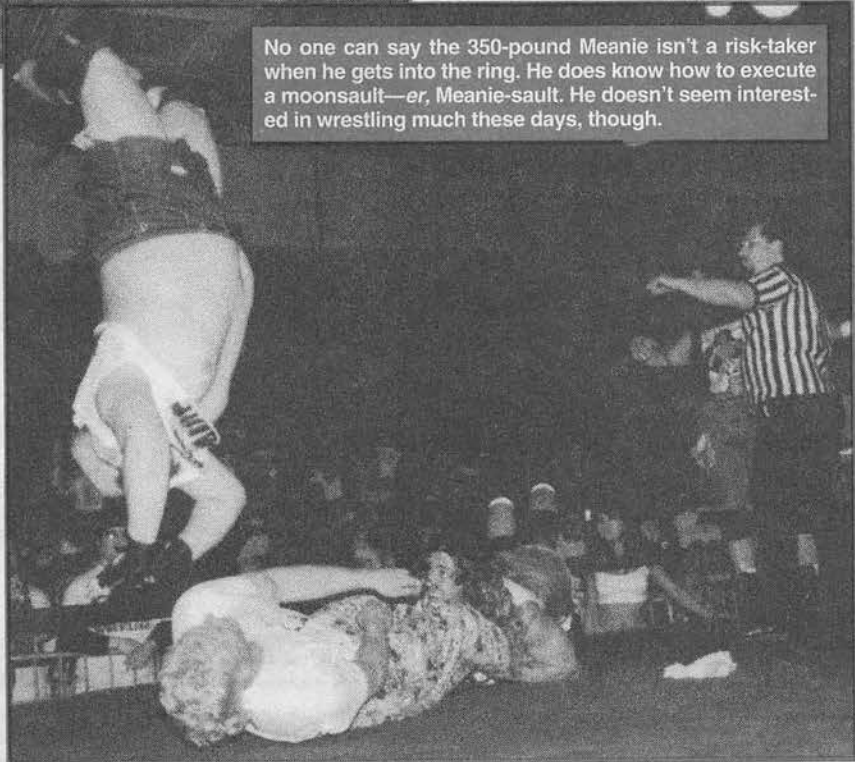
A: People consider The Blue Meanie off-beat because The Blue Meanie wants to rule the universe. What's so unusual about that? It's an admirable goal, don't you think?

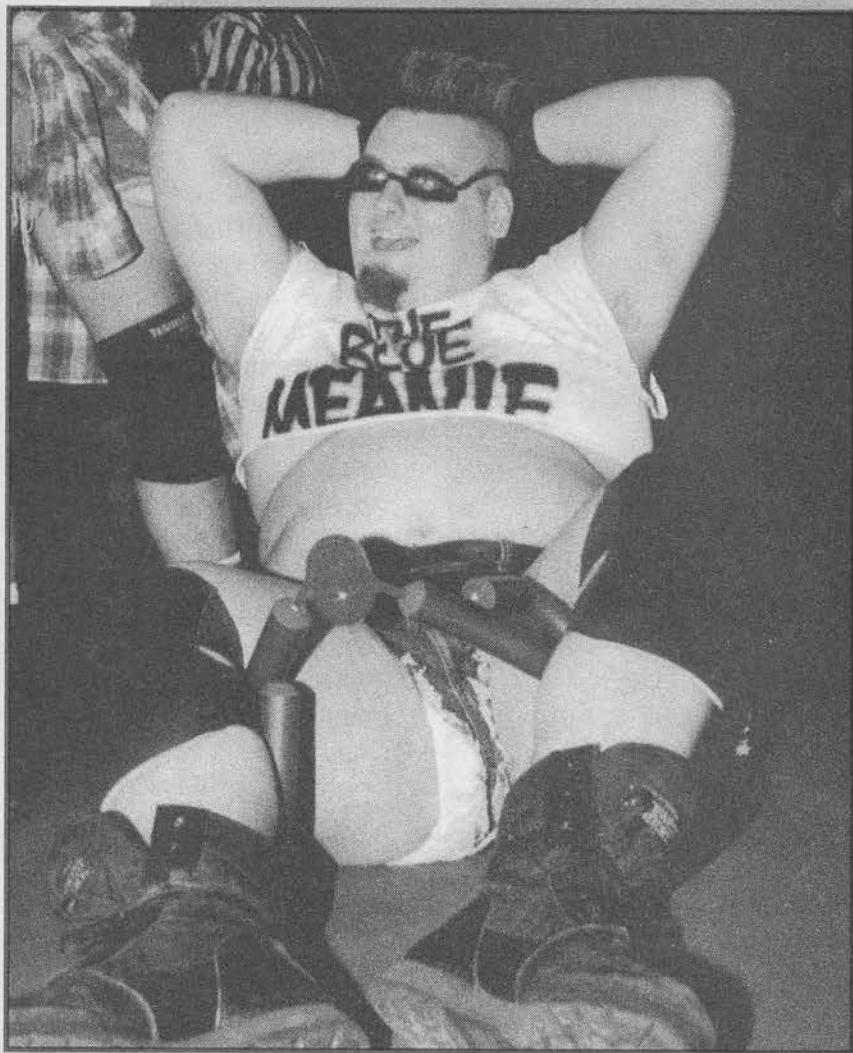
Q: Well, it's pretty much the general opinion that most people who want to rule the universe are out of their minds.

A: The Blue Meanie is not out of his mind. The Blue Meanie is out of this universe!

Q: I can see that, but, for example,

No one can say the 350-pound Meanie isn't a risk-taker when he gets into the ring. He does know how to execute a moonsault—er, Meanie-sault. He doesn't seem interested in wrestling much these days, though.





A lot of good this Thighmaster has done to improve the Meanie's physique, huh? Don't tell him that. He thinks he's perfect the way he is.

something important.

Q: Such as?

A: Such as **The Blue Meanie's plan to rule the universe.**

Q: That would be my pleasure. Please go on.

A: **The Blue Meanie is no ordinary man. The Blue Meanie is special.**

Q: I feel like I'm interviewing a blue Bob Dole. He favors the third person, too.

A: **Bob Dole is not going to rule the universe. He is not special. He is old.**

Q: But he also doesn't plan to rule the universe. How do you plan to do it?

A: **The Blue Meanie is not able to divulge that information**

at this time.

Q: But you just said ...

A: **It doesn't matter. The information is confidential. You'll find out soon enough.**

Q: So this is a plan in progress?

A: **The Blue Meanie cannot say.**

Q: I can see this is going to be a great interview. You bring up a subject and refuse to talk about it. I bring up a subject and you change it to a subject you won't talk about. Feel like talking about Miss Patricia, the so-called "Meanie Babe"?

A: **Oh, yes.**

Q: Okay, what's with her?

A: **She is The Meanie Babe. She is The Blue Meanie's babe.**

Q: Incredible. Does she like the paint on your face?

A: **What paint?**

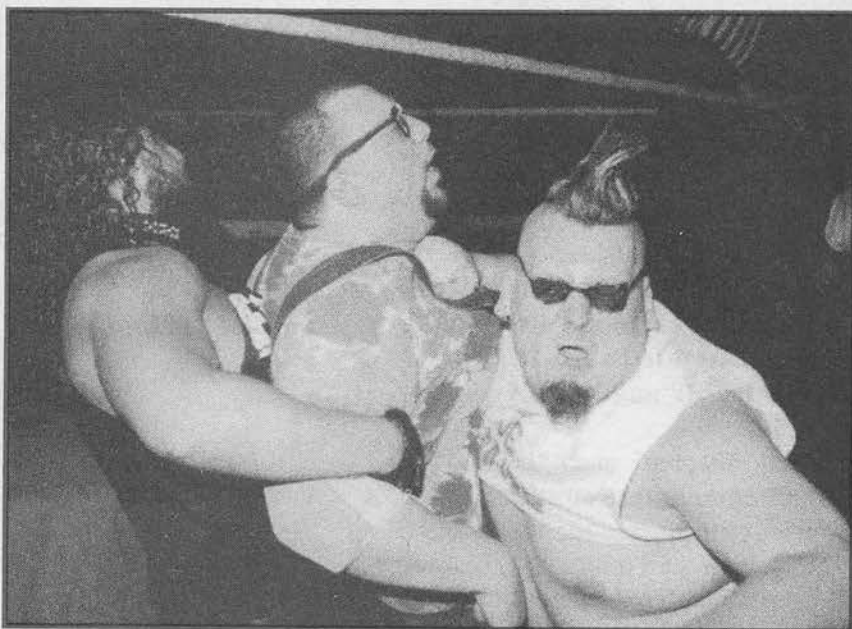
Q: The paint all over your face?

A: **What paint?**

Q: Now we're dealing with hallucinations. Okay, let's try another subject. How about ...

A: **How about The Blue Meanie's exercise program?**

Q: Okay, sure. I see you've brought along your Thighmaster.



The Meanie takes a shot at Bubba Ray Dudley while Damien Kane holds him. Bubba Ray is one man he definitely does not get along well with. In fact, Meanie once challenged him to a dancing contest.

A: A personal gift from Suzanne Somers.

Q: Are you using it?

A: The Blue Meanie carries it around all the time.

Q: Do you plan on losing weight or going on a diet?

A: Why would The Blue Meanie do that? That's not necessary. The Blue Meanie is perfect. The Thighmaster is a vital part of The Blue Meanie's master plan to rule the universe!

Q: The Thighmaster? Good grief! Have you gone completely mad?

A: The Blue Meanie is not mad. The Blue Meanie gets angry sometimes, but he is not mad. He is perfect.

Q: Perfect? A blue, fat man wearing a half-shirt is perfect?

A: Watch out. The Thighmaster has other uses.

Q: Great. How about your hair? Is your hair blue?

A: Of course The Blue Meanie's hair is blue. Otherwise he would just be The Meanie.

Q: Why is it blue?

A: Because it would look ridiculous if it was green.

Q: Of course. Or purple, or orange, or even Dennis Rodman orange. Blue.

A: Blue is perfect. Before you go on, could The Blue Meanie ask you a favor?

Q: I know I'll regret this, but why not.

A: Would you shine The Blue Meanie's socks? The Blue Meanie needs someone to shine his socks today, and The Meanie Babe is not available.

Q: No, I will not shine The Blue Meanie's socks. I have never shined anyone's socks and I never will. Maybe we should just talk wrestling. You've wrestled occasionally in

ECW—and even used your favorite move, the Meanie-sault—but lately you have just been standing in Raven's corner and Stevie Richards' corner for their matches. Why don't you wrestle very often anymore?

A: The Blue Meanie wrestles often enough. Besides, he has other things to worry about.

Q: Such as?

A: The Blue Meanie's master—

Q: Plan to control the universe. Right. But how about expanding your horizons, maybe make an appearance or two in the WWF or WCW?

A: When The Blue Meanie controls the world, he will control all federations, not just ECW.

Q: But if the WWF or WCW offered you a contract?

A: The Blue Meanie never takes yes for an answer.

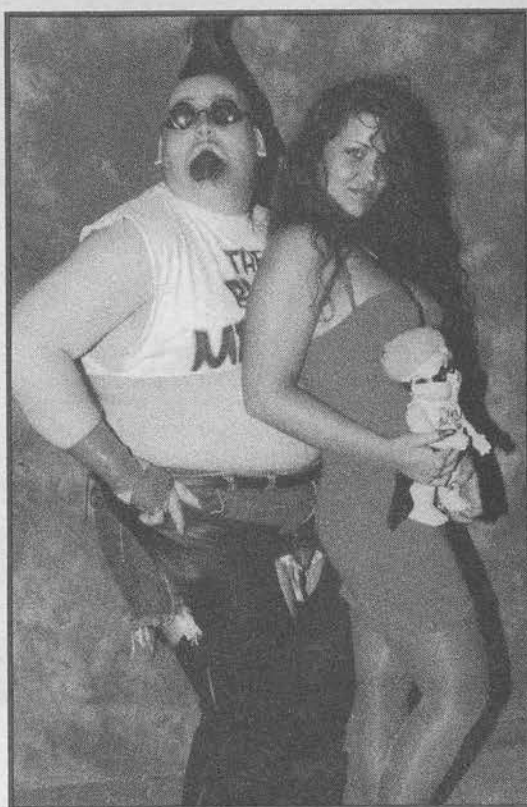
Q: So you're against affirmative action, but I know you're pro-dancing. Are you a better dancer than Bubba Ray Dudley?

A: Yes. Dancing sets The Blue Meanie's soul free. It is an outlet for his emotions. It's an expression of the passion The Blue Meanie feels in his soul.

Q: Ugh! Okay. Fill in the blank. We all live in a ...

A: Yellow submarine, with blue wallpaper.

Q: A personal touch, obviously. You know, there's a question I've been meaning to ask you for the longest time. The Fox Network is experimenting with



It's hard to believe someone as unusual as the Meanie could get a beautiful woman like Miss Patricia to be his lackey. The Meanie Babe must be helping him with his plan to rule the universe or something.

a new puck on its NHL hockey broadcasts, and the puck has a streak to make it more visible on TV. The streak is blue.

A: Blue is beautiful.

Q: Have you seen the puck?

A: The Blue Meanie does not have time to watch TV.

Q: Do they have televisions in Pepperland?

A: TVs, but no hockey.

Q: You know, Don Cherry—he's a TV analyst on a hockey show in Canada—has a dog named Blue.

A: Who is Don Cherry? What are you talking about? Do you want The Blue Meanie to beat you to a pulp? Talk sense!

Q: Now there's the pot calling the kettle blue. Blue Meanie, thank you for your time. It's been interesting. Not exactly informative, but interesting.

A: The Blue Meanie thanks you.

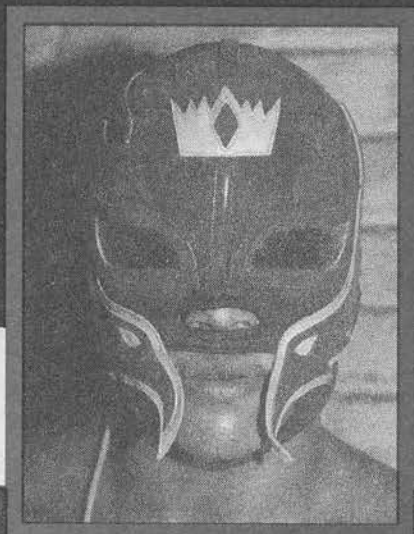
Q: Tell him he's welcome. □

X-

THE WRESTLER

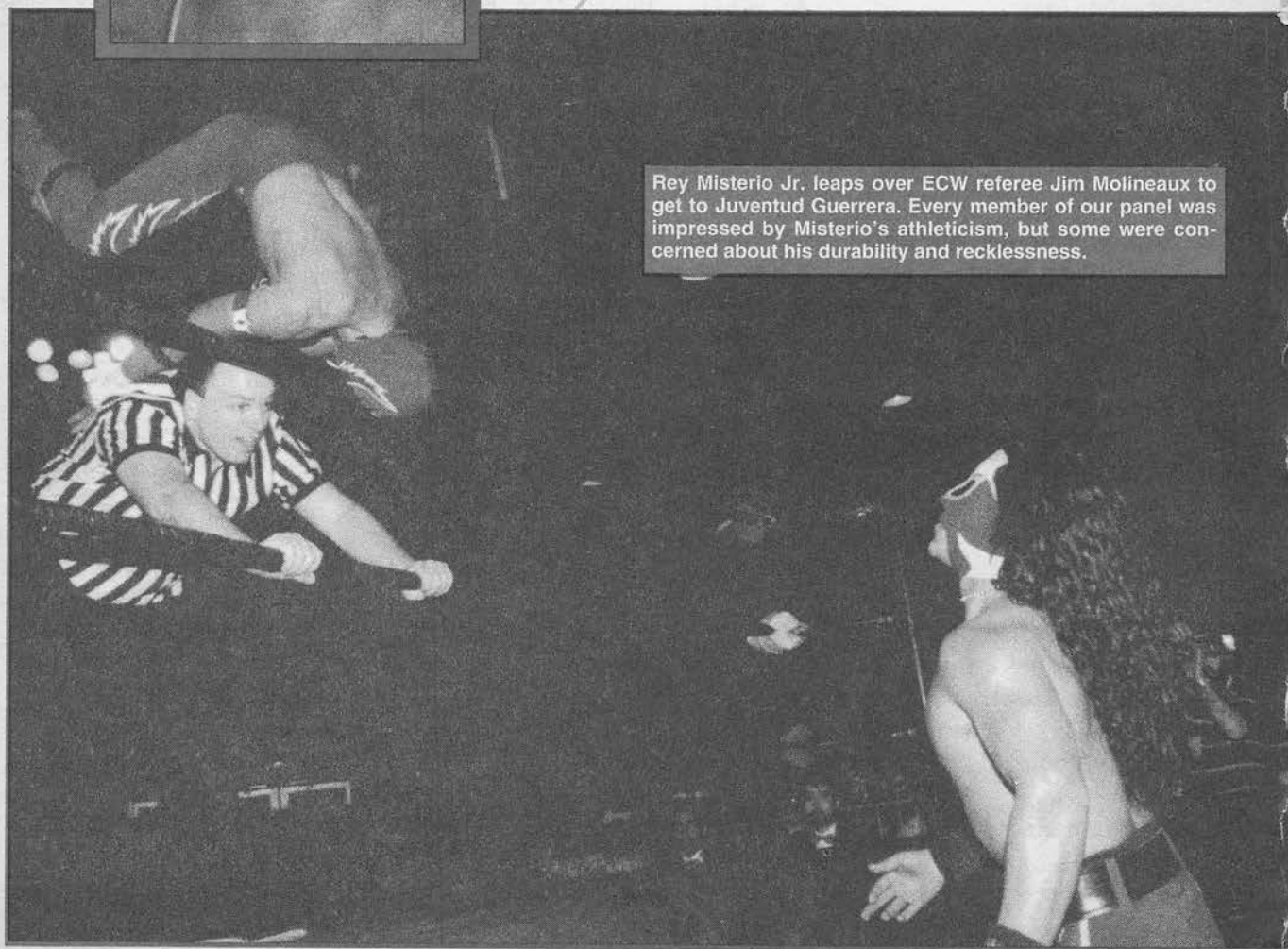
Ray

PANEL EXAMINES



REY MISTERIO JR.

Rey Mysterio Jr. leaps over ECW referee Jim Molineaux to get to Juventud Guerrera. Every member of our panel was impressed by Mysterio's athleticism, but some were concerned about his durability and recklessness.





CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"If I was just a little lighter when I was in my prime, I think I woulda been a lot like this kid. Who am I kidding?! This guy does things I can honestly say I've never seen before inside a wrestling ring. He's unbelievable! He's an innovator and an agitator, brother. Guys who wrestle him get so frustrated because he's so quick and they get away from their game plan. Rey Misterio Jr. is gonna make it big in the States before he's done. He's already changing wrestling!"

Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has led 13 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"When a friend of mine first told me about him, I thought Misterio sounded like the kind of wrestler I'd just hate. I like wrestlers who come right out and go toe-to-toe with you. Give me a good, hard fight to watch and I'm happy. Misterio isn't that, but he's more than just a great aerial wrestler. He has the ability to change moves slightly to fit his style and to alter his moves slightly in mid-flight. That shows he's always thinking. I like smart wrestlers."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



DORY FUNK JR.

"Misterio is a wrestler who you think just can't possibly be as good as everyone says he is, but he is. He might have a larger repertoire of moves than anyone in wrestling today. But I am worried about his future. I'm not talkin' about 10 years from now, either. At 5'3", 140, he might not last three more years. A lot of big guys out there are dyin' to take him down. I don't know how many poundings his body can take without totally breaking down."

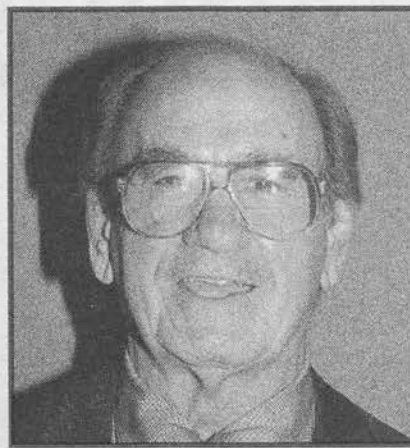
Dory Funk Jr. held the NWA World championship from 1969 to 1973. He still wrestles from time to time, primarily in Japan.



FABULOUS MOOLAH

"To be honest, darlin', if I ran into Rey Misterio Jr. without his mask on, I'd probably tell you he belonged on a playground, not in a wrestling ring. Because he's so small, I think some of his opponents don't take him as seriously as they should, even though he has a great reputation. They think one good punch will put him out, but they can never get that shot in. He has to keep inventing new moves to keep his opponents off-guard. It's a matter of survival."

Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.



LOU THESZ

"What we often overlook when watching Misterio is the fact that he's fundamentally sound. He can outwrestle an opponent on the mat if he has to. He doesn't use that strategy often, because he doesn't like to get in tight clinches. He'd rather keep his opponents away from him. That's why he's always diving at them from all different angles. He's one of the few wrestlers in the world who's almost unscoutable. His matches just don't follow specific patterns."

Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-around wrestler in history.



LANCE RUSSELL

"I've seen a lot of Misterio's matches on tape, and I'm impressed. What concerns me is that he might be turning into one of these wrestlers who always feels he has to outdo what he did the previous night just to impress the fans. Guys like that usually end up suffering serious injuries before long. Maybe he can keep outdoing himself. He has managed to do well for himself in Mexico. I'd sure love to see him compete more regularly in the U.S. He has so much talent."

Lance Russell, a wrestling broadcaster since 1954, is now retired. He makes periodic guest appearances on WMC-TV in Memphis.

Spotlight N...

"MR. PERFECT" CURT HENNIG

IS HE RETURNING to the ring to challenge Shawn Michaels? Is he going to be a manager? Will he be satisfied to remain a broadcaster? WWF fans want to know the answer to all these questions regarding Curt Hennig, but "Mr. Perfect" isn't offering many direct answers. All he'll say is he has a "Perfect" plan.

The former AWA World and two-time former WWF Intercontinental champion caused quite a stir this spring when he came to ringside to scout a Michaels-Hunter Hearst Helmley match and when he blatantly favored Jerry Lawler while officiating a series of Lawler-Razor Ramon matches. A lot of WWF wrestlers would probably like a shot at him in the ring, but a back injury has kept him on the sidelines for the last two-plus years.

The son of former wrestler Larry "The Ax" Hennig, Curt trained under his father and former AWA champ Verne Gagne before turning pro in 1980. He had a rather uneventful stint in the WWF in the early-1980s, but after gaining valuable experience in the Pacific Northwest, he was ready to do some damage in the AWA. He and Scott Hall (a.k.a. Razor Ramon)



won the AWA tag belts from Jim Garvin and Steve Regal in January 1986, but Hennig was more interested in singles glory. He won his only world title when he beat Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA championship in May 1987.

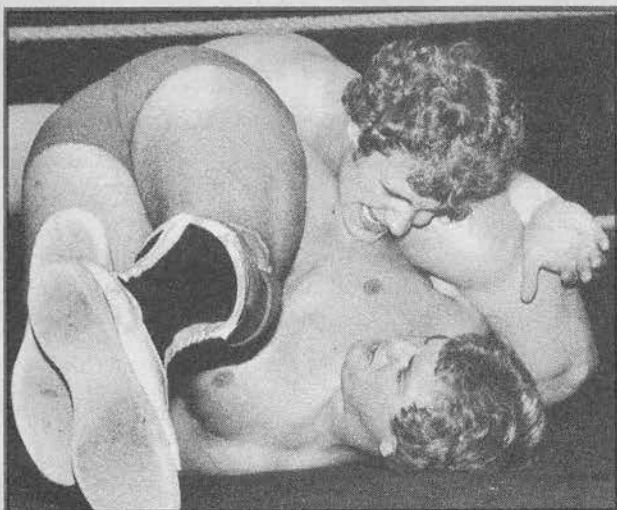
He feuded with, among others, Bockwinkel, Greg Gagne, and Lawler before taking on the "Perfect" persona upon returning to the WWF. He

came up short in his bid to win the WWF World title from Hulk Hogan, but thanks to the help of manager Bobby Heenan, he won his first I-C belt by defeating Tito Santana in a tournament final in April 1990. Kerry Von Erich took that belt from him four months later, only to see Hennig win it back three months after that.

When a back injury originally sidelined him about a year later, "Mr. Perfect" became executive consultant to Ric Flair. That relationship would eventually fall apart, too, though, and Hennig beat the "Nature Boy" in a loser-leaves-the-WWF match. Some of Hennig's other memorable WWF feuds were with Shawn Michaels, Bret Hart, and Diesel. He sparked controversy at WrestleMania X when, as special referee for a Yokozuna-Lex Luger World title match, he used what some considered questionable judgment in disqualifying Luger.

He and Luger never did end up wrestling each other after that.

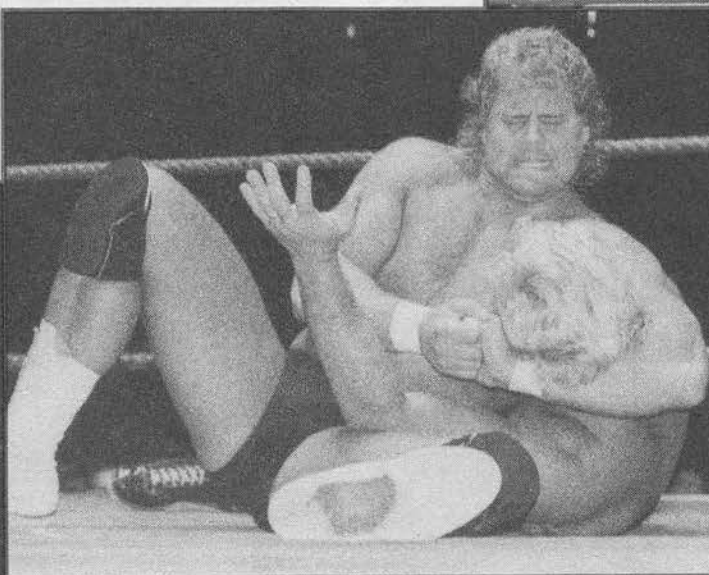
Now we're left wondering if he'll ever wrestle again. Whatever he chooses to do in the future, says Hennig, he'll do it "perfectly." We're not sure about that, but we agree this is the perfect time to feature him in our "Spotlight."



February 1992: "Mr. Perfect" handled Razor Ramon (his former tag team partner in the AWA) pretty well in a feud four years ago, but he must still hate him today. His biased officiating cost Ramon a few matches this May.



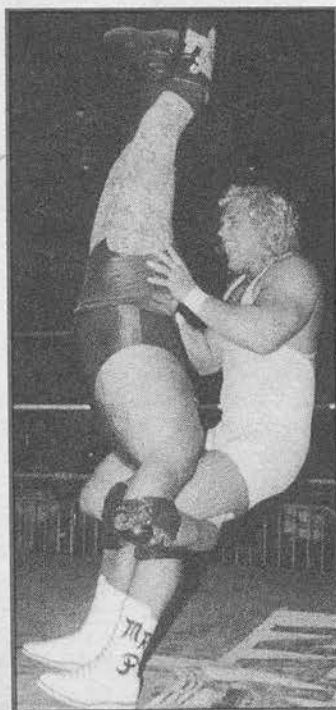
November 1982: Hennig was just another struggling up-and-comer when he first arrived in the WWF. He had a hard time beating even fellow up-and-comers such as Eddie Gilbert then.



May 1987: Hennig won what many thought would be the first of many world titles when he bested Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA belt. Now it looks as if he may never win another world title.



May 1993: If Hennig's back does heal and he can return to the ring, maybe he will win the WWF World title. Three years ago, when he was a fan favorite and Shawn Michaels a rulebreaker, he beat Michaels several times.



June 1993: Hennig and Lawler are WWF allies now, but there used to be a lot of animosity between them. Hennig was so furious with Lawler three years ago that he challenged him on his home turf in Memphis.

October 1987: Technical excellence is what Hennig has always strived for inside the ring, and he showed what a great scientific wrestler he is during a feud with Greg Gagne in the AWA.



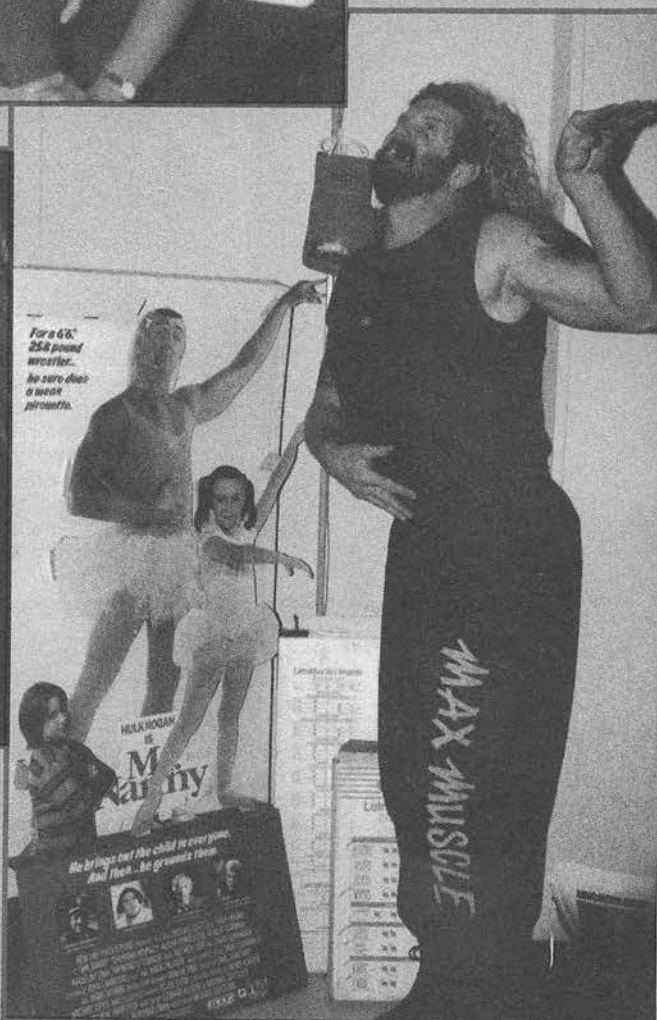
THE SQUARED CIRCLE



◀ Is Johnny Gunn searching for a valet? If so, it appears Julie Brown, a former MTV veejay whom Gunn met at a convention in California, might be ready to take on the job!



▲ If you're going to be a clown, you had better know how to apply face paint. Doink the Clown was happy to show off his artistic skills to this youngster.

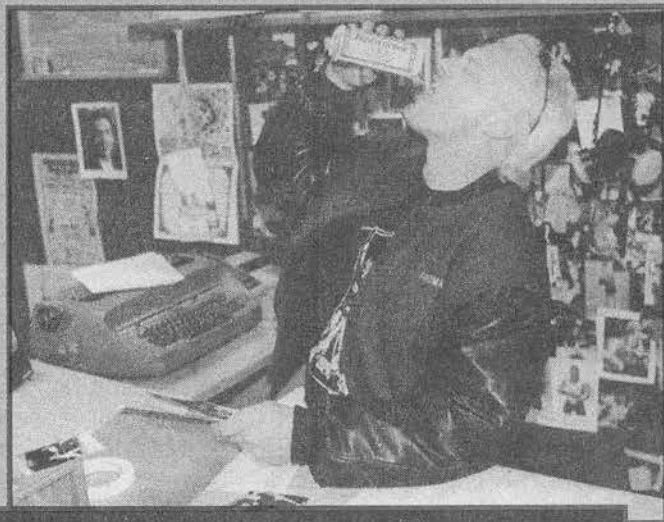


► This picture tells us one of two things: Either "Diamond" Dallas Page enjoys poking fun at Hulk Hogan, or he's letting us know he'd like to play the lead in *Mr. Nanny II*.

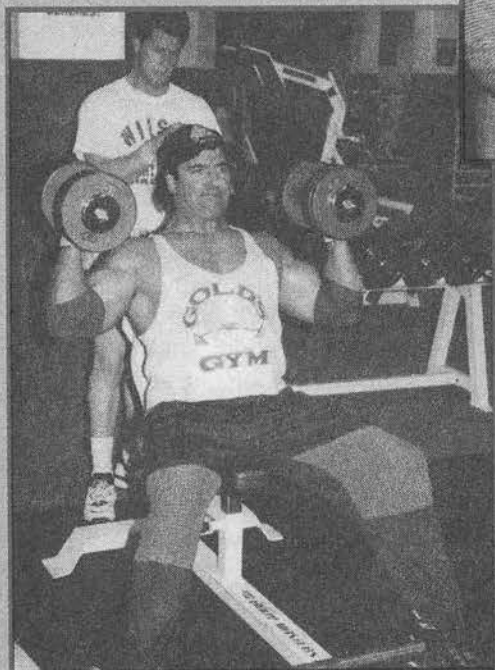
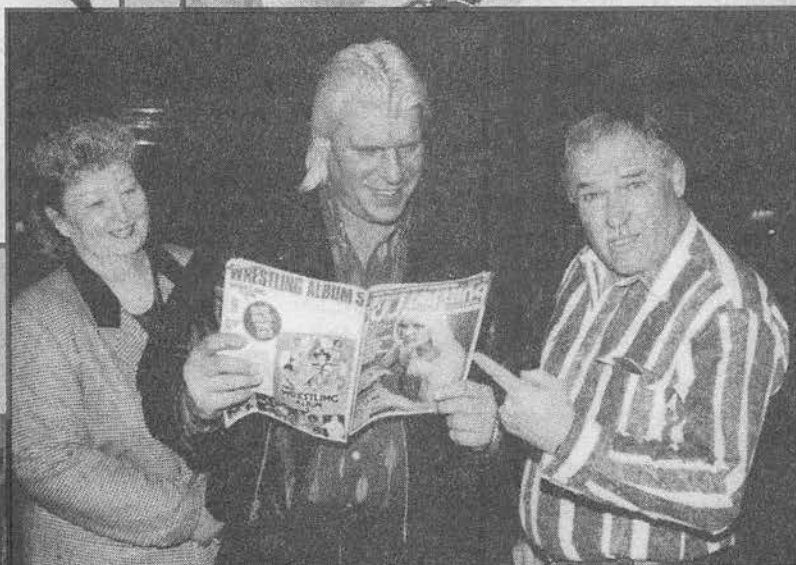
▼ Sabu doesn't strike us as the kind of madman who would be a movie buff, but maybe he enjoyed *Aladdin*. Either that or he's about to destroy this cardboard cutout of the title character!



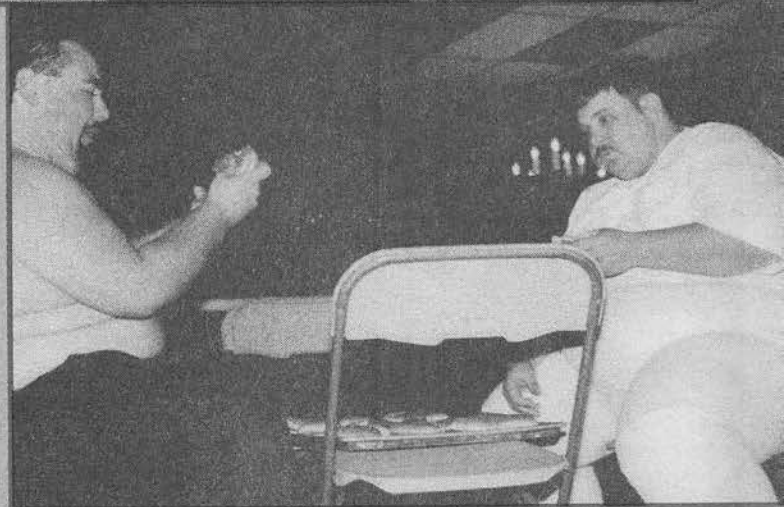
▼ When The Sandman visited our offices for a photo shoot, he made sure to bring his wrestling trunks, his Singapore cane, and, of course, a can of beer. Doesn't this guy ever drink soda?



► We don't want to say Tommy Rich is living in the past, but that copy of *PWI* he's reading (as Peggy and Tommy Gilbert look on) is cover-dated October 1983!



▲ How can a man still be a very effective wrestler after spending 24 years in the sport? By doing like Rick Martel does and spending many, many hours in the gym.



▲ Take a look at Vinnie Biondo and Chef D.Z. Gillespie, both of Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling, and guess who you think would win a cheeseburger-eating contest. We bet they've both downed a few in the past!

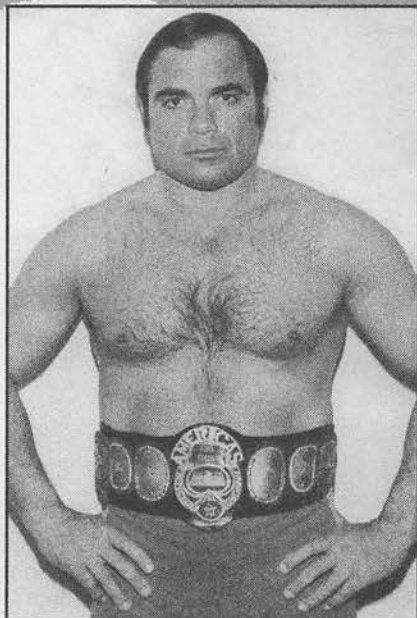
Scrapbook

Explore with us the rich history of this great sport as we recall the important news stories at five-year intervals dating back a quarter of a century

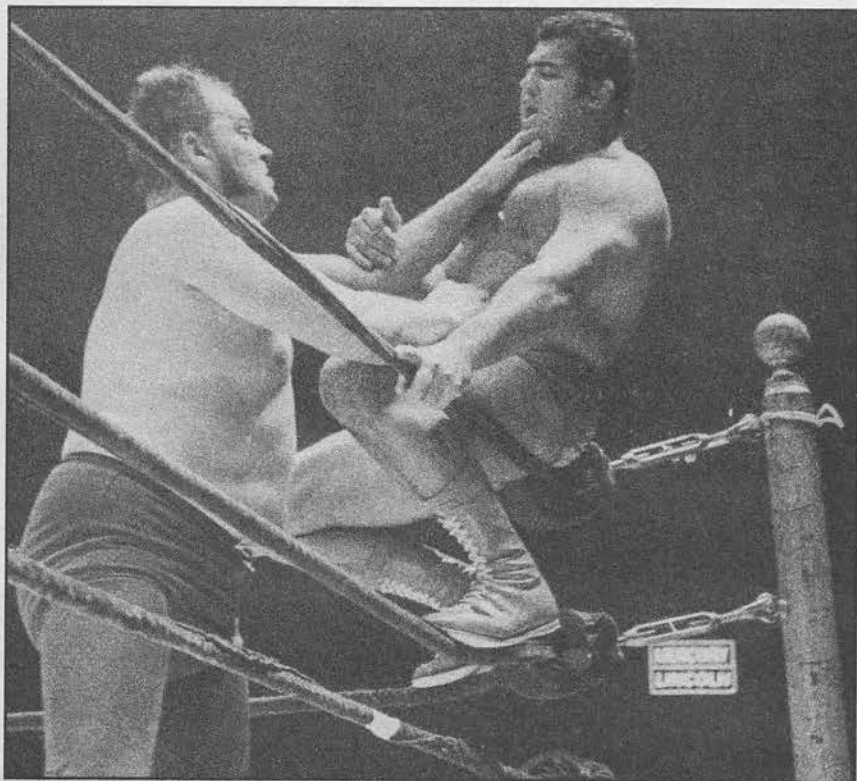
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
1971

THE LARGEST CROWD to date to attend a sporting event at New York's Madison Square Garden saw Pedro Morales successfully defend his WWF championship with a victory over Stan Stasiak. The crowd of 22,070—85 more than the previous record, set at the July matches—paid a record \$104,456. In the co-feature event, Victor Rivera and Chief Jay Strongbow defeated "Crazy" Luke Graham and Tarzan Tyler, who retained their WWF tag team belts via disqualification ...

In an uncharacteristic display of cowardice, newly crowned Americas champion John Tolos pleaded with Los Angeles promoters not to force him to defend his title against Mil Mascaras. "I want to be Mil's friend," said the "Golden Greek." "I have nothing against Mascaras. Why do I have to wrestle him?" ... Johnny Valentine came within a hair's breadth of upsetting NWA champion Dory Funk Jr. in St. Louis ... Pat O'Connor and Jack Brisco formed a winning tag team ... Wild Bull Curry broke Bobo Brazil's record—right over his head. As Bobo, the U.S. champion, signed autographs for the fans, Curry snuck up from behind and smashed "The Ballad



Perhaps it was a psychological ploy, but John Tolos appeared to be scared to death to defend the Americas title against Mil Mascaras.



Pedro Morales utilized the support of 22,070 fans to mount a comeback against Stan Stasiak in defense of his WWF World title at Madison Square Garden in the fall of 1971.

Of Bobo Brazil" over Brazil's head. Bobo turned around, smiled, and gave Curry a thrashing ... Fans in Florida began calling Jack Brisco the "Texas Death Match Champion" after he soundly defeated Dory Funk Sr., who first claimed the title. Insiders said that Brisco took out all of his anger on the elder Funk after NWA champion Dory Jr. hightailed it out of Florida to the Midwest rather than give Jack a shot at his title ... Verne Gagne made two defenses of his AWA title against Nick Bockwinkel, winning the first and losing the second by disqualification when he accidentally flipped Bockwinkel over the top rope.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Pedro Morales; 2—Bruno Sammartino; 3—Stan Stasiak; 4—Jim Valiant; 5—Chief Jay Strongbow; 6—Gorilla

Monsoon; 7—Beautiful Bobby; 8—Luke Graham; 9—Tarzan Tyler; 10—Karl Gotch.

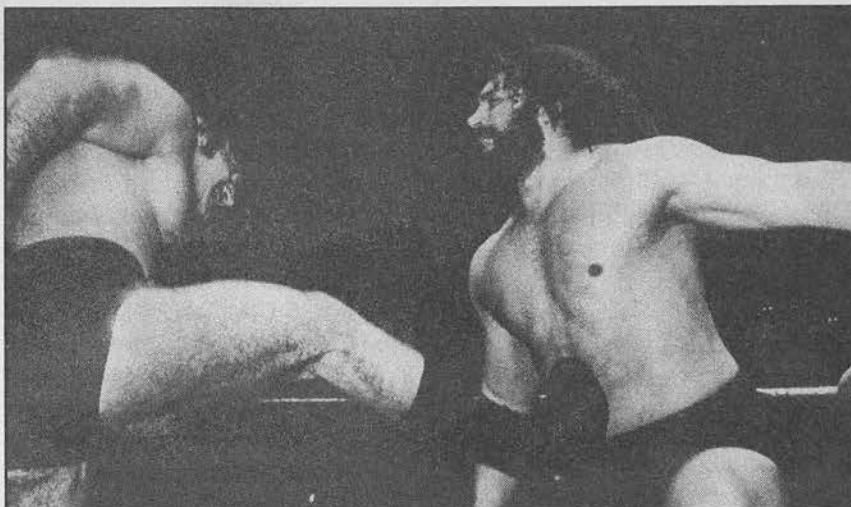
NWA RATINGS: 1—Dory Funk Jr.; 2—Jack Brisco; 3—Fritz Von Erich; 4—Fred Blassie; 5—Mil Mascaras; 6—Eddie Graham; 7—The Sheik; 8—John Tolos; 9—Nick Bockwinkel; 10—Johnny Valentine.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Verne Gagne; 2—Edouard Carpentier; 3—Bruiser; 4—Baron Von Raschke; 5—Blackjack Lanza; 6—Butcher Vachon; 7—Red Bastien; 8—The Claw; 9—Mad Dog Vachon; 10—Blackjack Mulligan.

TAG TEAMS: 1—Pat Patterson & Billy Graham; 2—Luke Graham & Tarzan Tyler; 3—The Mongols; 4—Goliath & Black Gordman; 5—Mil Mascaras & El Sicodelico; 6—The Kangaroos; 7—Chief Jay Strongbow & Gorilla Monsoon; 8—Jack & Jerry Brisco; 9—Crusher & Red Bastien; 10—Blackjack Mulligan & Blackjack Lanza.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1976

BRUISER BRODY CAME within a foot of taking Bruno Sammartino's WWF crown at Madison Square Garden. After a furious battle, Bruno was trapped in a corner and snared in a pin by Brody. The referee counted Bruno out and awarded the belt to Brody. Ringside judges, however, pointed out to the referee that Brody had used the ropes for leverage and the referee reversed his decision ... Another decision reversal was less to the fans' liking. After Dusty Rhodes seemingly captured the Mid-Atlantic championship from Ric Flair, the commissioners determined after a film study that Wahoo McDaniel had illegally aided the referee, who had been injured during the melee ... Despite Mr. Fuji's effort to blind Alberto Madril with a handful of salt, the Mexican emerged victorious in a 14-man, \$12,000 battle royal in Sacramento, California.

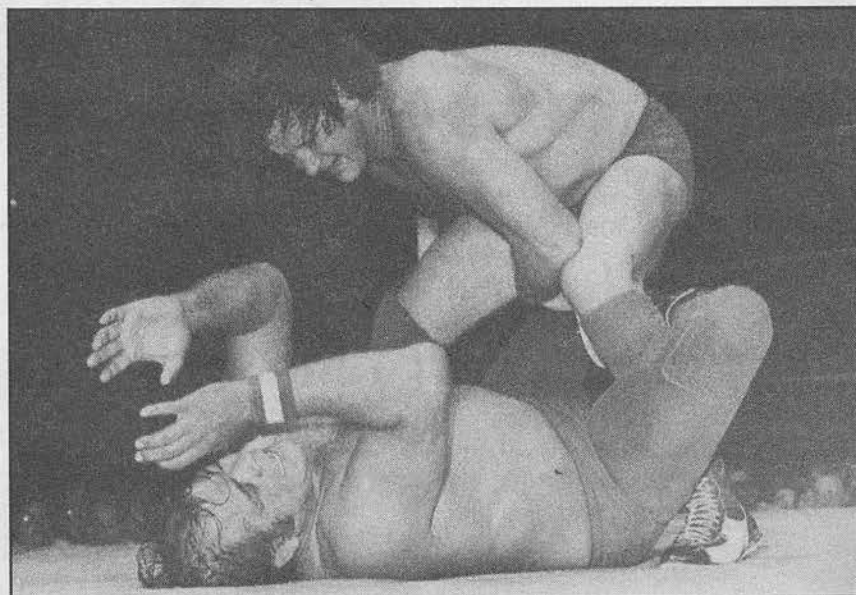


Bruno Sammartino appeared to lose the WWF title to Bruiser Brody in an October 1976 match, until ringside officials pointed out that Brody had used the ropes for leverage to get the pin.

Other top names in the battle royal included Pedro Morales, Tony Garea, Pat Patterson, and Haystacks Calhoun ... Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell went into special training for an upcoming crack at the AWA tag team belts held by Blackjack Lanza and Bobby Duncum ... Hard feelings developed between former NWA kings Jack Brisco and Pat O'Connor when Jack learned that O'Connor was advising Terry Funk ... Greg Valentine had a major falling-out with tag team partner Ray Candy and returned to the world of rule-breaking ... The wrestling world

wondered how long the team of Mighty Igor and Bulldog Brower would last ... NWA champion Terry Funk used the bottom rope for leverage to take the third and deciding fall from challenger Jose Lothario in a best-of-three-falls match ... Despite a vicious cut, Bulldog Bob Brown wrestled the Central States title away from Harley Race on September 5 in Wichita, Kansas.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Bruno Sammartino; 2—Stan Stasiak; 3—Nikolai Volkoff; 4—Bruiser Brody; 5—Stan Hansen; 6—Chief Jay Strongbow; 7—Bobo Brazil; 8—



Jose Lothario presented such a tough challenge to NWA champ Terry Funk in the fall of '76 that Funk had to use the bottom rope for leverage to pin him in the final fall of their best-of-three-falls match.

Ivan Putski; 9—Tor Kamata; 10—Billy White Wolf.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Terry Funk; 2—Jack Brisco; 3—Dusty Rhodes; 4—Blackjack Mulligan; 5—Mr. Wrestling; 6—Mil Mascaras; 7—Chief Jay Strongbow; 8—Ivan Putski; 9—Billy Robinson; 10—Wahoo McDaniel.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Verne Gagne; 3—Billy Robinson; 4—Peter Maivia; 5—Mad Dog Vachon; 6—Baron Von Raschke; 7—Bobby Duncum; 8—Blackjack Lanza; 9—Greg Gagne; 10—Chris Taylor.

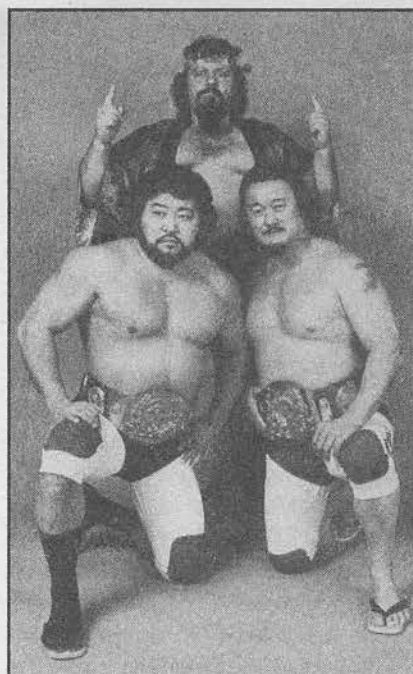
TAG TEAM RATINGS: 1—The Andersons; 2—The Executioners; 3—Bobby Duncum & Blackjack Lanza; 4—Bob Backlund & Steve Keirn; 5—Chief Jay Strongbow & Billy White; 6—The Valiants; 7—Goliath & Black Gordman; 8—The Mongols; 9—Phil Hickerson & Dennis Condrey; 10—Mighty Igor & Bulldog Brower.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1981

RIC FLAIR BEGAN his first reign as NWA World champion with a victory over Dusty Rhodes in Kansas City, Missouri, on September 17, 1981. Rhodes, who had his left leg injured the night before by Bobby Jagers and Assassin I, fell in 23:43 ... Hulk Hogan heard the cheers of the fans for the first time in his career when he saved popular Brad Rheingans from an attack by Crusher Blackwell. "It make me sick to see an all-American kid, one who was supposed to go to the Olympics last year, get dumped on by Blackwell for no reason at all," Hogan said. "If Blackwell wants to mess with sneak-attacks, let him try one on me. I'll kick his fat butt!" ... Terry Taylor and Barry Windham formed a popular tag team ... Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito, managed by Capt. Lou Albano, defeated Tony Garea and Rick Martel for the WWF tag team championship on October 13 in Allentown, Pennsylvania ... After

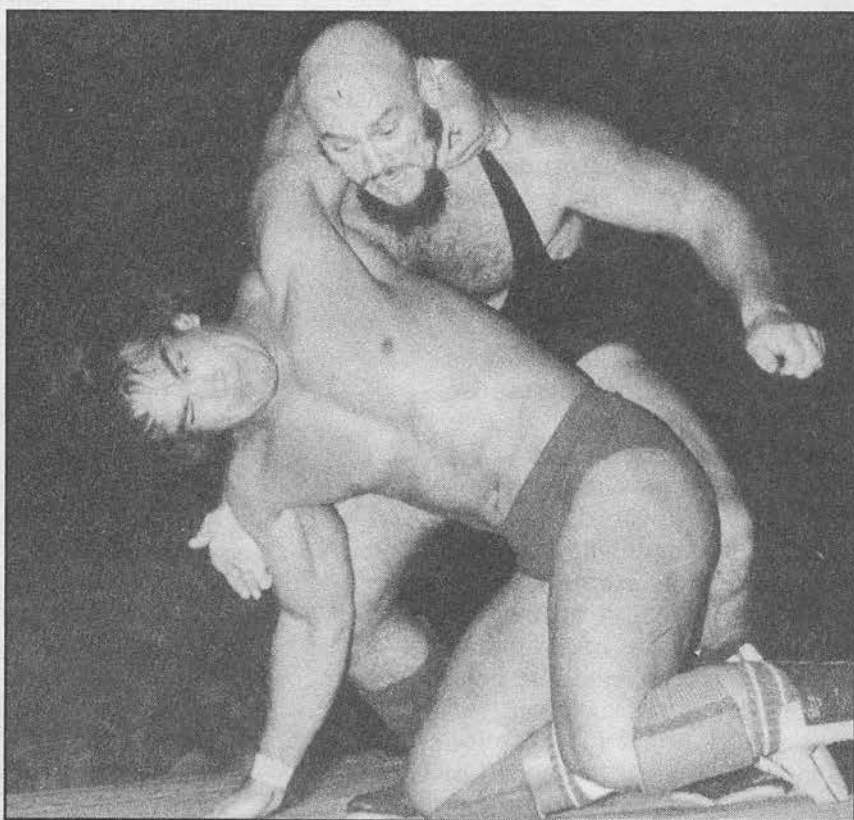
defeating Terry Gordy and Jimmy Snuka for the Georgia National tag team title on September 27 in Atlanta, Michael Hayes and former football star Otis Sistrunk decided to retire the title. Insiders said that Hayes felt that Sistrunk was too inexperienced and would not be able to give him the support he needed ... Charlie Cook regained the Florida title from Dory Funk Jr. in October, after Funk had defeated him for the belt two months earlier ... Rick Steamboat captured the Mid-Atlantic title from Ivan Koloff on October 10 in Norfolk ... The Missouri State title changed hands twice in St. Louis as Jack Brisco defeated champion Ted DiBiase on October 2 and Ken Patera bested Brisco on October 23 ... Sgt. Slaughter defeated Rick Steamboat in the finals of a tournament to fill the vacant NWA U.S. championship on October 4 in Charlotte. Former champion Wahoo McDaniel was forced to vacate the title after being injured by Abdullah the Butcher.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Bob Back-



Capt. Lou Albano guided yet another tag team to the WWF tag team championship when he managed Mr. Saito and Mr. Fuji to a win over Tony Garea and Rick Martel in October 1981.

lund; 2—Greg Valentine; 3—Magnificent Muraco; 4—Killer Khan; 5—Mil Mascaras; 6—Pedro Morales; 7—King Kong Bundy;



Fans in Norfolk were thrilled to see the very popular Rick Steamboat defeat Ivan Koloff for the Mid-Atlantic title in October 1981.



Magnum T.A. had to spend a lot of time in a hospital bed after getting into a serious auto accident in 1986. It marked the end of his wrestling career and the beginning of his friendship with long-time foe Nikita Koloff.

8—Pat Patterson; 9—Rick Martel; 10—George Steele.

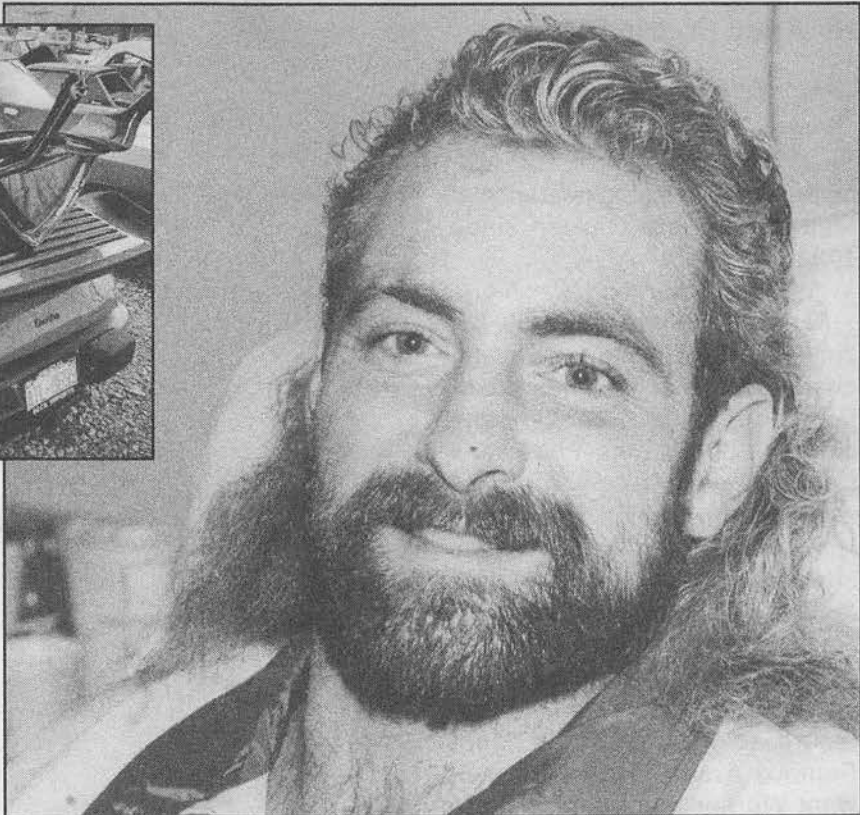
NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Wahoo McDaniel; 3—Rick Steamboat; 4—Ivan Koloff; 5—Dusty Rhodes; 6—Harley Race; 7—Charlie Cook; 8—Ken Patera; 9—Ted DiBiase; 10—Bob Roop.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Crusher; 3—Hulk Hogan; 4—Crusher Blackwell; 5—Tito Santana; 6—Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie; 7—Baron Von Raschke; 8—Ken Patera; 9—Greg Gagne; 10—Gino Hernandez.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Andersons; 2—Mr. Fuji & Mr. Saito; 3—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell; 4—The Assassins; 5—Jimmy Snuka & Terry Gordy; 6—Nikolai Volkoff & Chris Markoff; 7—Tony Garea & Rick Martel; 8—The Samoans; 9—Tully Blanchard & Gino Hernandez; 10—Masa Fuchi & Mr. Oneida.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1986

A MAGNIFICENT wrestling career was cut short on October 14 when former U.S. champion Magnum T.A. crashed his Porsche into a utility pole and suffered severe spinal injuries. Days after the accident, he was befriended by his sworn enemy Nikita Koloff ... Sixteen days earlier, U.S. cham-



pion Koloff united the U.S. and National titles with a victory over Wahoo McDaniel at Atlanta's Omni ... Kevin Von Erich won the World Class title from Black Bart in Dallas on October 12 ... In a rare display of honesty, Curt Hennig refused to accept the AWA World title because he had pinned champion Nick Bockwinkel after Larry Zbyszko knocked out Bockwinkel with nun-



Fans in Florida got to see a hot feud over the Florida title between Barry Windham and Ron Bass in 1986. They traded the belt back and forth three times between July and September.

chakus ... Butch Reed began wrestling in the WWF—as a blond ... Road Warriors manager Paul Ellering declared war on Jim Cornette and The Midnight Express after the threesome attacked Animal and injured his back ... Rick Rude left World Class for the NWA, where he aligned himself with manager Paul Jones ... Former WWF World champion Bruno Sammartino came out of retirement to feud with Intercontinental titlist Randy Savage. A color commentator on WWF telecasts, Bruno was disgusted by the way the “Macho Man” brutalized Rick Steamboat ... Dusty Rhodes captured the NWA TV title from Arn Anderson on September 9 in Columbia, South Carolina ... Barry Windham and Ron Bass feuded intensely over the Florida title.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Hulk Hogan; 2—Randy Savage; 3—Paul Orndorff; 4—Roddy Piper; 5—Jake Roberts; 6—Rick Steamboat; 7—John Studd; 8—Dick Slater; 9—Harley Race; 10—Magnificent Muraco.

NWA RATINGS: 1—Ric Flair; 2—Nikita Koloff; 3—Dusty
(Continued on page 58)

By Andy Rodriguez

SCREAMING FANS HAD a chant they'd been practicing in anticipation of The Ultimate Warrior's first appearance at Madison Square Garden since 1992:

"War-ri-or! War-ri-or! War-ri-or!"

Not much to practice really, but they wanted to make sure everyone knew their chant was heartfelt. The Warrior was back in the big time, back in the WWF, and they were overjoyed.

"I've been waiting so long for him to come back," said one loyal supporter. "Now I almost can't believe he's here. It's amazing! I'm so excited!"

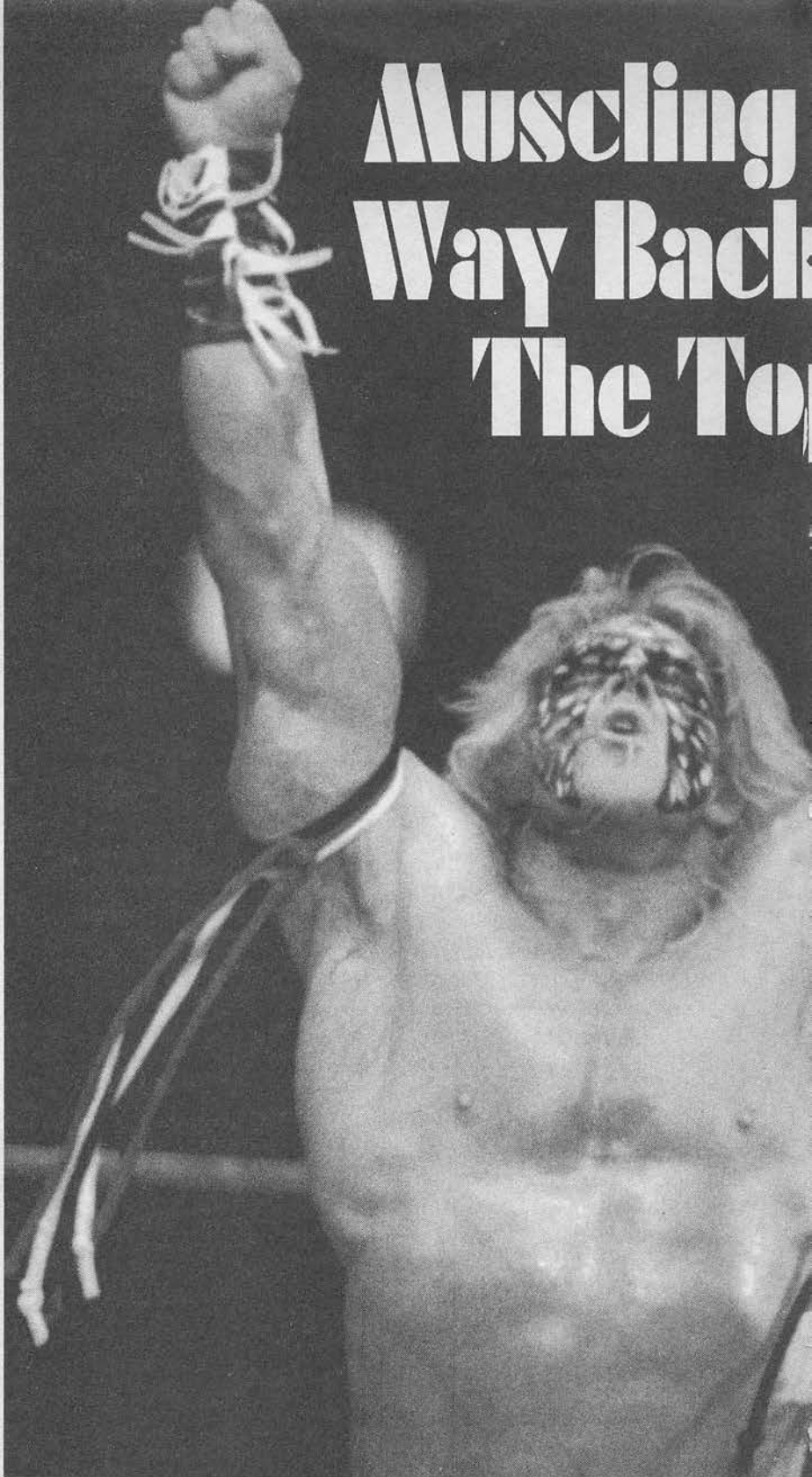
Owen Hart wasn't excited. He was Warrior's opponent for his return to "The World's Most Famous Arena." Hart had seen what Warrior had been doing to his competition. He wasn't afraid of the Warrior, but he was wary. Extremely wary.

"What Owen sees in Warrior is a guy who has won the World title and who has proven he can be very dangerous," said his brother Bruce. "The guy may act pretty crazy at times, but that stuff doesn't fool Owen at all."

Hart wasn't fooled, but neither he nor many of his fellow WWF wrestlers expected Warrior's comeback to be so successful thus far. The word is out: The Ultimate Warrior is back, and he is very, very serious indeed.

Warrior's success was a surprise if only because he was away for so long. For 3½ years, he was out of the WWF, out of the bigtime altogether. Although he wrestled occasionally on the independent circuit, he barely showed the fire

Muscling Way Back The Top



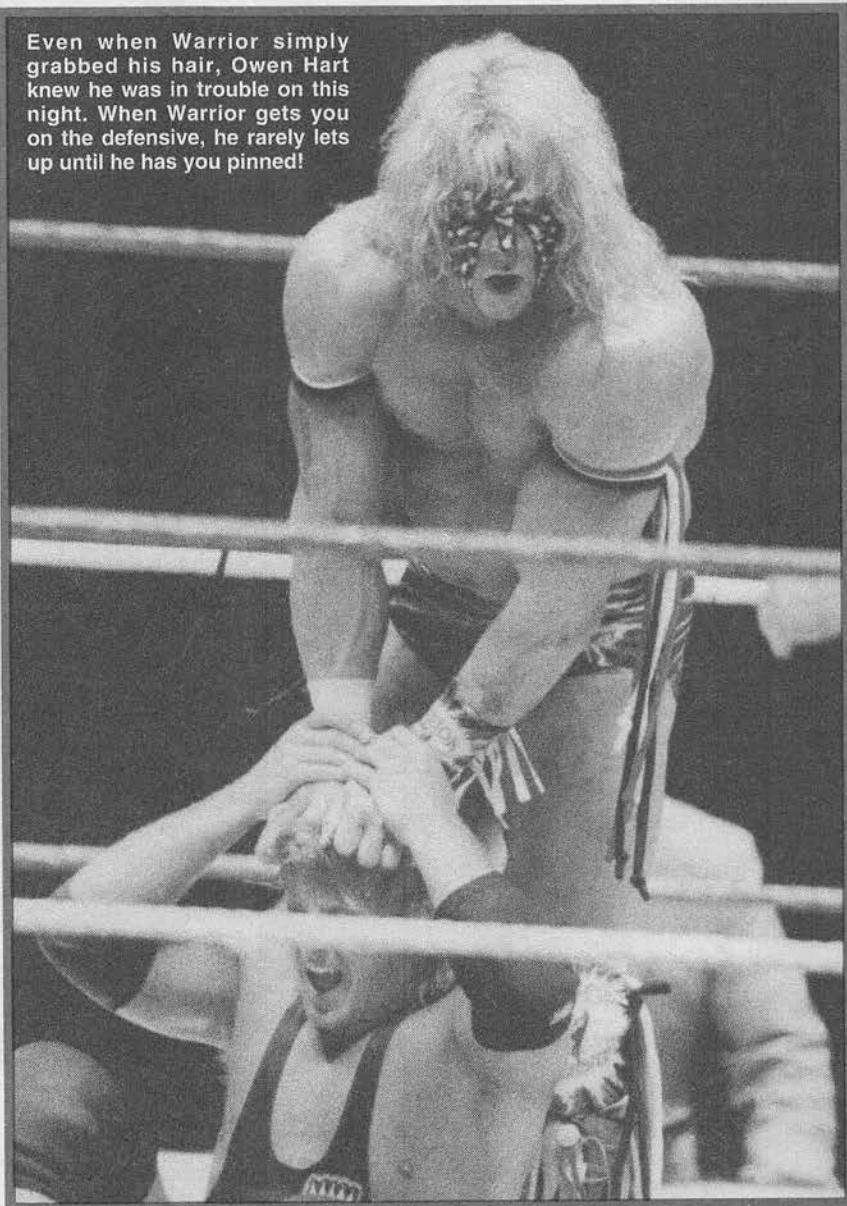
THE WARRIOR IS REAL

His
To
P



Some were skeptical about The Ultimate Warrior's return to the WWF. Could he ever be as great as he once was? That question has been answered. Warrior is more determined than ever to reach the pinnacle. Next stop: the World title

Even when Warrior simply grabbed his hair, Owen Hart knew he was in trouble on this night. When Warrior gets you on the defensive, he rarely lets up until he has you pinned!



ADY TO RULE AGAIN!

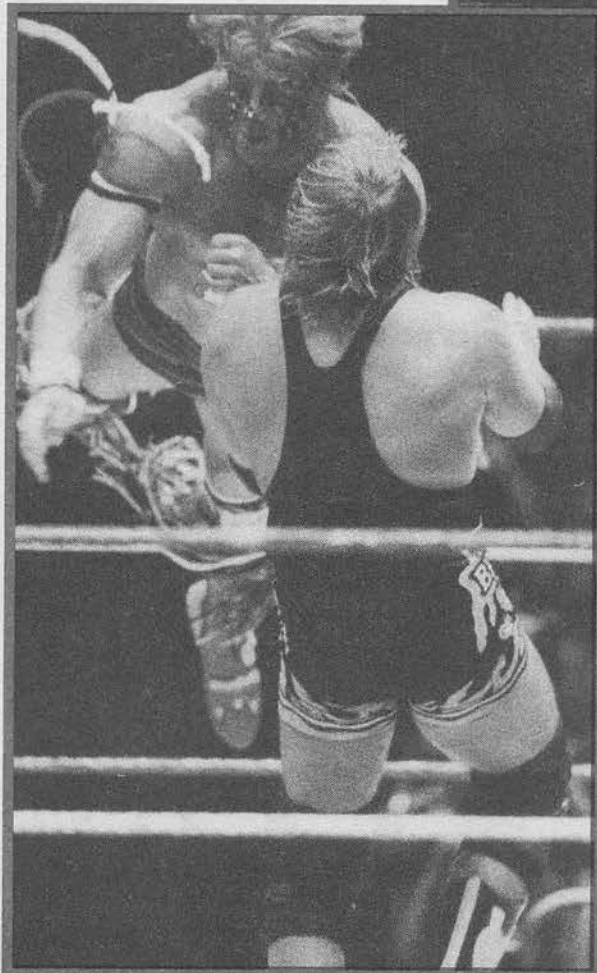
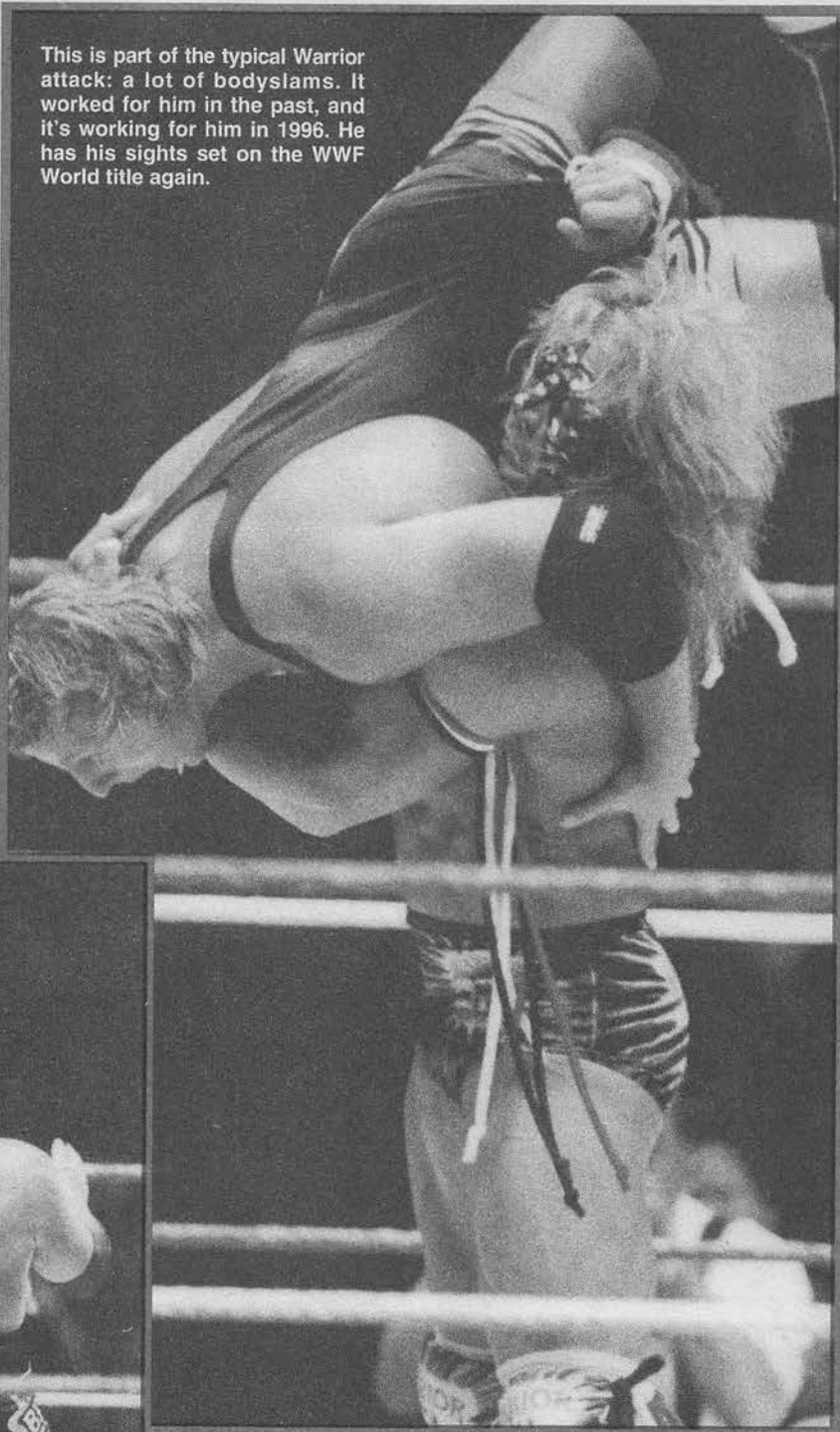
and intensity that carried him to the WWF World and Intercontinental titles.

"He seemed content to make a living just being the main attraction wherever he went," said one independent promoter. "I didn't sense in him any desire to win the WWF title again, and I wasn't the only one who felt that way."

Warrior may have continued as an independent star, too, had it not been for something Hulk Hogan did. Last year, he introduced to WCW a wrestler named The Renegade, who was little more than a cheap imitation of The Ultimate Warrior. Fans who thought Hogan was bringing in his old friend (and rival) from the WWF received a major disappointment.

Renegade dressed and tried to act like the Warrior, but that's where the similarities ended. Warrior has never been accused

This is part of the typical Warrior attack: a lot of bodyslams. It worked for him in the past, and it's working for him in 1996. He has his sights set on the WWF World title again.



What's this—has The Ultimate Warrior developed an aerial arsenal? No, not really. It's just a flying shouldertackle. It's the kind of move someone such as, say, Shawn Michaels better not underestimate.

of having outstanding scientific skills, but Renegade was much worse. Worse yet, he lacked the spirit of the Warrior.

"Here was somebody who ran around, pumping himself up and acting like a madman," said Bobby Morris, 14, of Alpharetta, Georgia. "You could see that he wanted everybody to think he was the second coming of the Warrior, but he wasn't."

Renegade also caught the Warrior's attention.

In fact, he once told **THE WRESTLER** that he "felt sorry" for Renegade. He was probably embarrassed by his performance in the ring, too.

Several months later, Warrior was back in the WWF, but not as a conquering hero. He was back as just another contender who'd have to work his way to the top.

"It was made clear to him," said a source in the WWF front office, "that nothing would be handed to him. He'd have to prove himself all over again."

To the surprise of many, Warrior didn't huff, puff, and complain. He didn't start issuing non-negotiable demands. He simply set to the task before him. He took on Hunter Hearst Helmsley, a youngster with a lot of talent, and beat him. He took on Intercontinental champion Goldust and beat him, if only by countout.

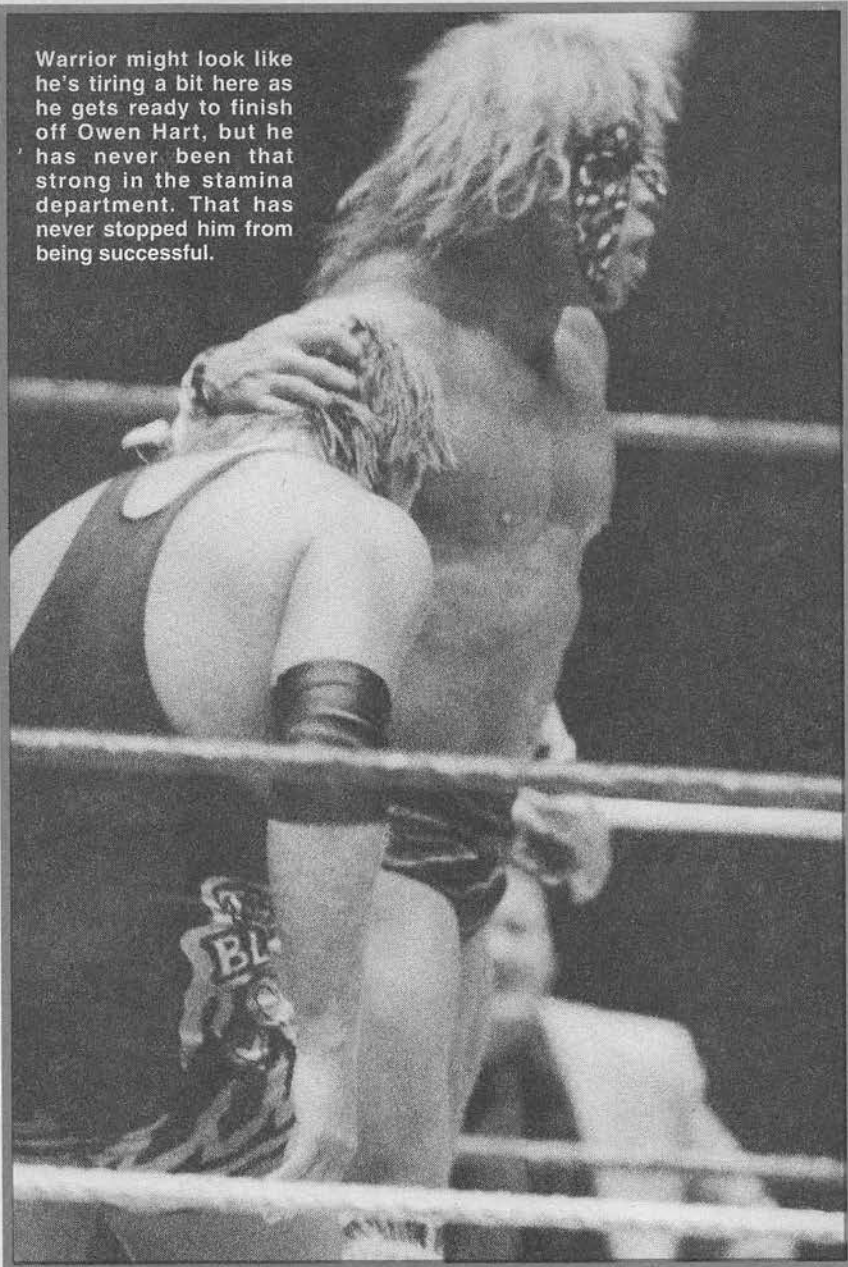
Most impressive, though, were Warrior's performances against Big Van Vader. Even Warrior's biggest supporters were afraid the vicious behemoth would stop their man's rise in the rankings. Warrior erased their fears. He stood up to Vader and defeated him with a ruthlessness that few believed he possessed.

"One night he beat Vader," said Jake Roberts, "I knew behind all that face paint and bluster there was a real athlete. Even all he did before hadn't sold me, but that night he did."

That is why Hart was so wary when he faced Warrior. He knew he'd have to battle hard to avoid being subjected to Warrior's awesome power moves, especially his frightening press-slam and brutal clothesline. He knew his brilliant scientific skills might not save him from all that.

He was right. Warrior won convincingly, using his press-slam and clothesline to full effect. The victory proved that Warrior could beat the technicians as well as the brawlers.

Warrior might look like he's tiring a bit here as he gets ready to finish off Owen Hart, but he has never been that strong in the stamina department. That has never stopped him from being successful.



"It also makes him a contender for the World title again," said Samantha Lewis, 15, of Ridgewood, New Jersey, who witnessed Warrior's triumph at the Garden. "He proved he deserved a shot at Shawn. When is he going to get it?"

Warrior loyalists across the country and around the world are asking the same question. While it's true that some may be over-anxious, Warrior has demonstrated that he is worthy of such consideration. His rise has been quick, but honest. As promised, nothing was given to him. He beat the man who were put in front of

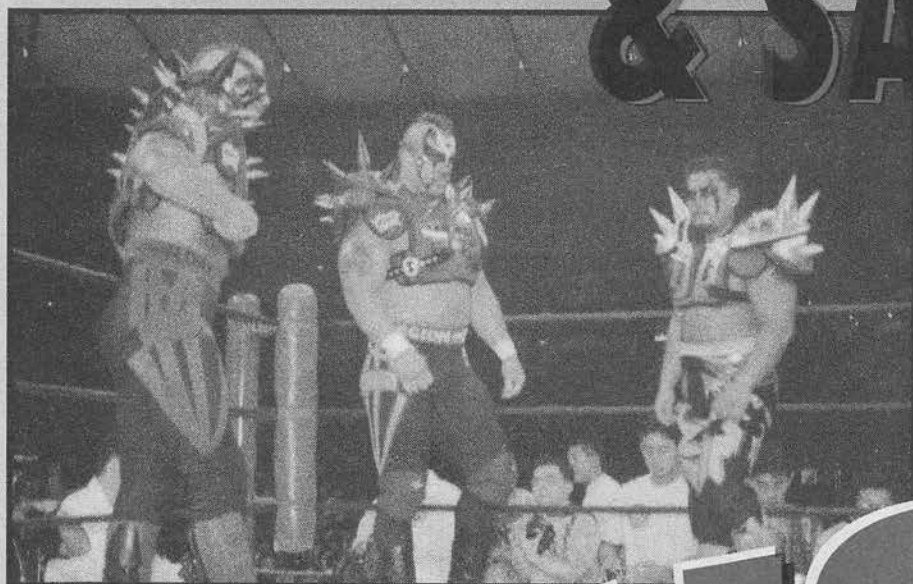
him. What more can he do?

"A lot of guys have been here longer and want their shots at Shawn," said a veteran WWF official. "They haven't enjoyed watching Warrior come in here and do so well. On the other hand, they know that because of Warrior's history, he'll probably get his chances a lot quicker than them."

WWF World champion The Ultimate Warrior? A year ago it didn't seem possible. Six months ago it seemed highly unlikely. Today it doesn't sound so strange.

Just give him the shot. He'll do the rest. □

ROAD WARRIORS & SASAKI



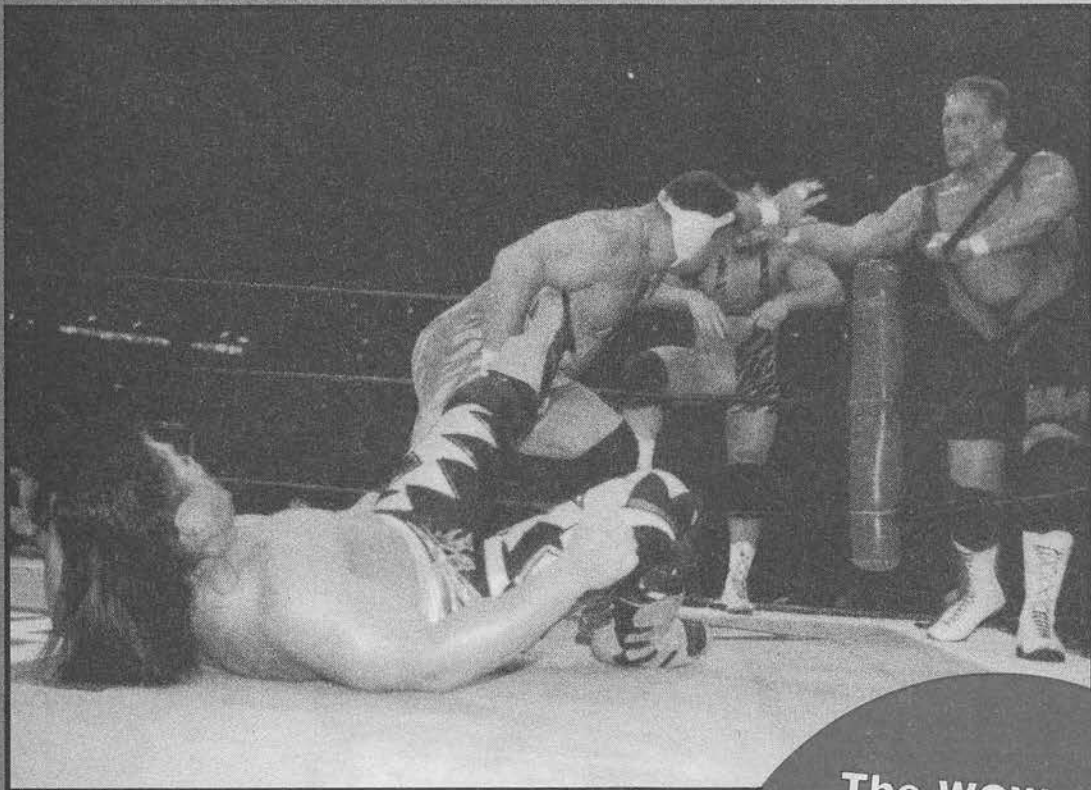
VS.



STEINERS & NORTON

Is WCW Reviving The Six-Man Championship?

Photos by Koichi Yoshizawa



Rick Steiner holds the leg of Kensuke Sasaki while tagging Scott Norton. Both Steiners say they'd like to see the six-man tag team title revived, and it could happen soon.

By Dave Rosenbaum

IF YOU'RE A newcomer to wrestling, you are hereby forgiven for not knowing that there used to be an NWA six-man tag team championship. How could you know? Records of the title's history are not listed in most title books, and it is not even mentioned in *The 1996 Pro Wrestling Illustrated Almanac*.

Here's what you should know: The Road Warriors held the six-man (which is a misnomer

The WCW six-man tag team title is gone but not completely forgotten ... and sources say it could be brought back and defended at an arena near you soon

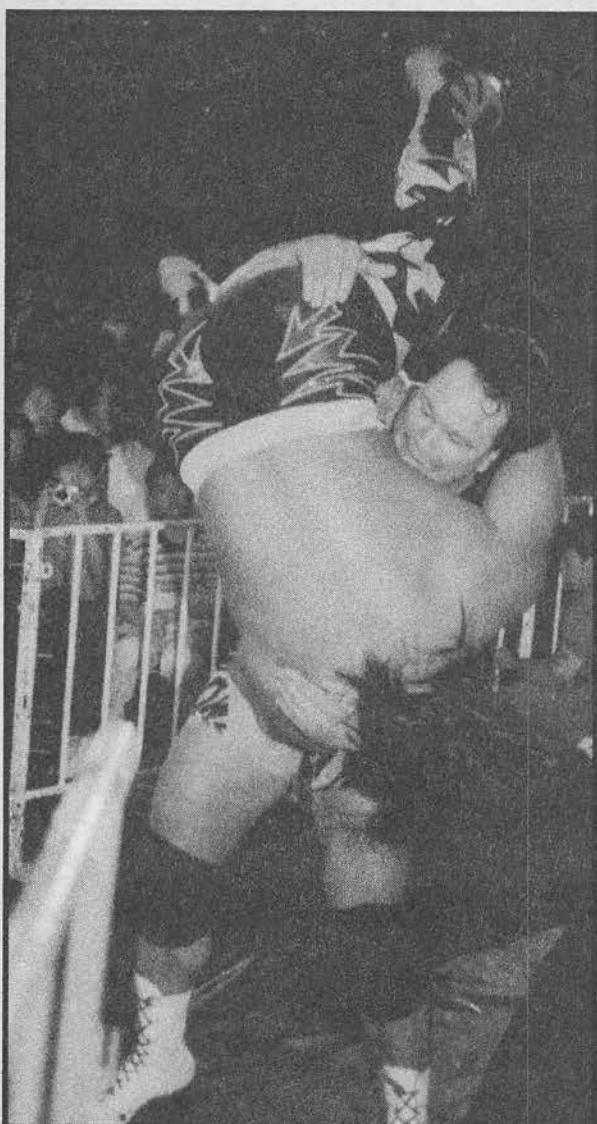
because it's really a three-man team) tag team championship with Dusty Rhodes twice. Some experts say they were the best

"Another reason is that The Road Warriors, who probably did more for the six-man title than any other team, dropped out of sight for a few years," noted WCW expert Donald Wayne. "Six-man tag team matches usually involve a lot more brawling than regular tag team matches, so when the Warriors went, the title went, and when Dusty Rhodes retired, interest in the title really waned."

The good news for fans of these brawls—or for the many people who have never seen one—is that The Road Warriors re-

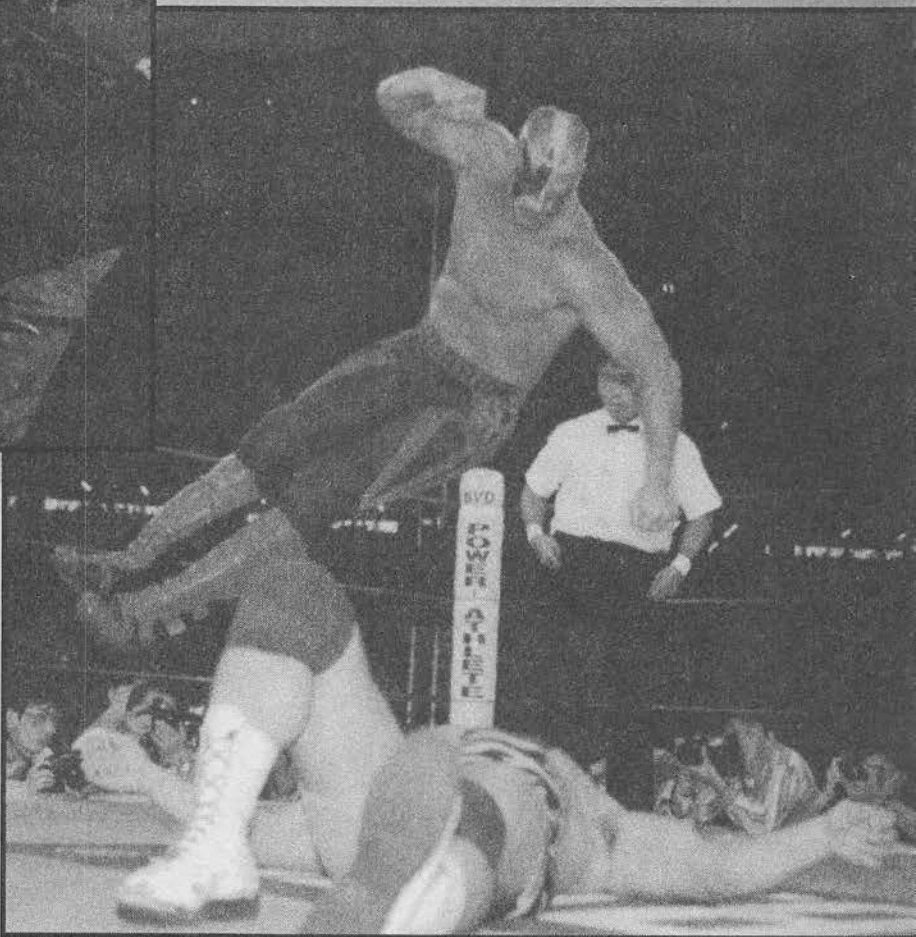
cently teamed with Kensuke Sasaki to beat Rick Steiner, Scott Steiner, and Scott Norton in a series of six-man matches in Japan. Although at press time there was no indication of WCW bringing these battles to the United States, insiders tell us there has been talk of reviving the six-man championship.

"They've added the cruiserweight title, and now they're looking into the six-man title again," said a source close to the WCW Championship Committee. "Years ago, there was a trend toward pruning the number of championships offered, supposedly to make each one more valuable, but now WCW has reconsidered that stand. Apparently, they feel there aren't enough titles suited to certain varieties of wrestlers, such as the under-200 pound crowd and even those in the 200-to-220-pound



A recent six-man match between the Steiners and Norton and The Road Warriors and Kensuke Sasaki quickly turned into an out-of-control brawl. To some fans, that's exactly the appeal of six-man matches.

six-man team ever assembled. The Freebirds also had an impressive six-man team. In October 1991, The York Foundation—Thomas Rich, Terrence Taylor, and Richard Morton—defeated Dustin Rhodes, Tom Zenk, and Big Josh to win the belts. But over the past five years, the six-man tag team title has faded from the public consciousness as WCW has pared down its list of championships.



Hawk takes aim on Scott Steiner with a flying fistdrop. Both the Steiners and Warriors could probably find partners and go after a six-man title, but even if they did, they might not find that much competition in that area.

group. Now they're thinking of reviving the six-man title because it's the only one of its kind."

The Road Warriors would welcome a revival of the six-man belt for a variety of reasons.

looked forward to seeing. There's nothing else like it in wrestling."

Dusty Rhodes, with tongue planted firmly in cheek, suggested he would consider a comeback if the six-man title was revived. Rick

to wrestle together regularly; it's even harder to find three in a sport laden with cliques. The battle for the six-man tag team title often boiled down to a battle between two or, at most, three teams.

•A lack of title defenses.

Even in its modest heyday, the six-man title was defended no more than once a month, usually on a major card. With so much history and prestige backing the WCW World tag team title, teams have a hard time getting serious about what is perceived as a secondary title. The 30-day rule was not only unenforced, it was bent, spindled, and mutilated by unob-servant titleholders.

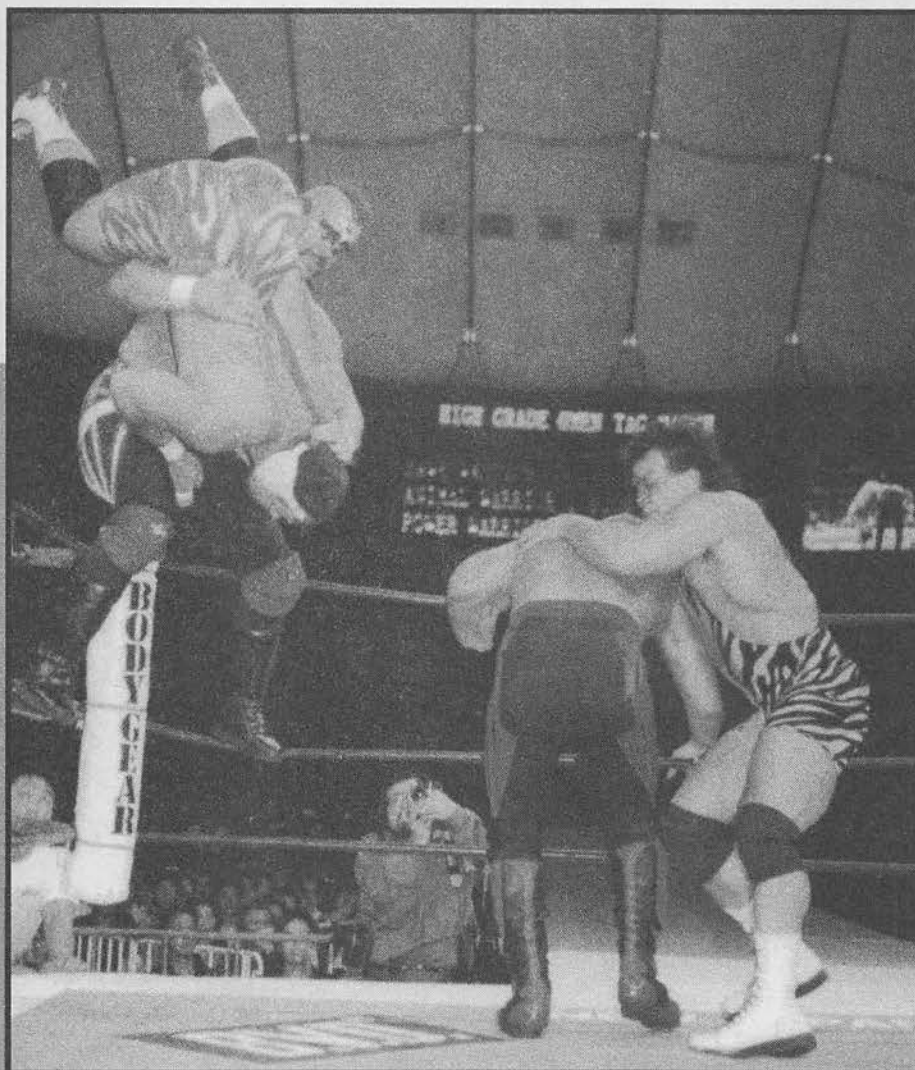
•The format. Although a six-man match sounds like a non-stop brawl, it's really not much different from a regular tag team match. The difference is that instead of one man on each team always waiting to wrestle, there are two inactive wrestlers on each side. Wrestlers often went long stretches without any action.

At this point, it's difficult to predict whether WCW will revive the six-man championship. Before Animal returned to the sport, Hawk wrestled regularly with Sasaki in Japan as The Power Warriors, and would like to try it again, but he doesn't want to turn his back on Animal.

Whether Hawk, Animal, and Sasaki can get together on U.S. turf, and whether they'll have a title to shoot for, should be decided shortly.

In the meantime, WCW has acknowledged that it is looking for input from the fans on the subject. Let them know what you think through correspondence directed to "Your Letters."

"If the fans want a six-man title," said Commissioner Nick Bockwinkel, "we'll give it very strong consideration." □



Rick Steiner was pinned by Animal in the midst of the confusion of this six-man match. If he'd like a rematch in the U.S., he ought to lobby the WCW Championship Committee, which is considering reinstating the six-man title.

Growled Hawk: "Then we'd have more belts to win."

Added Animal: "Me and Hawk like it when it gets good and crowded in there. It separates the wimps from the real men."

But Hawk, in a quieter moment, explained the real appeal of the six-man title.

"Six-man wrestling is something that happens a lot, and there should be a title for it," he said. "Me and Animal were proud when we had the six-man belts with Dusty, and it's something people

and Scott Steiner would also like to see it happen.

"One of the best things about it is that a lot of times, you get to team with somebody you ordinarily wouldn't team with, but at the same time you don't have to get rid of your regular partner," Rick said. "Me and Scott [Steiner] are both in favor of it."

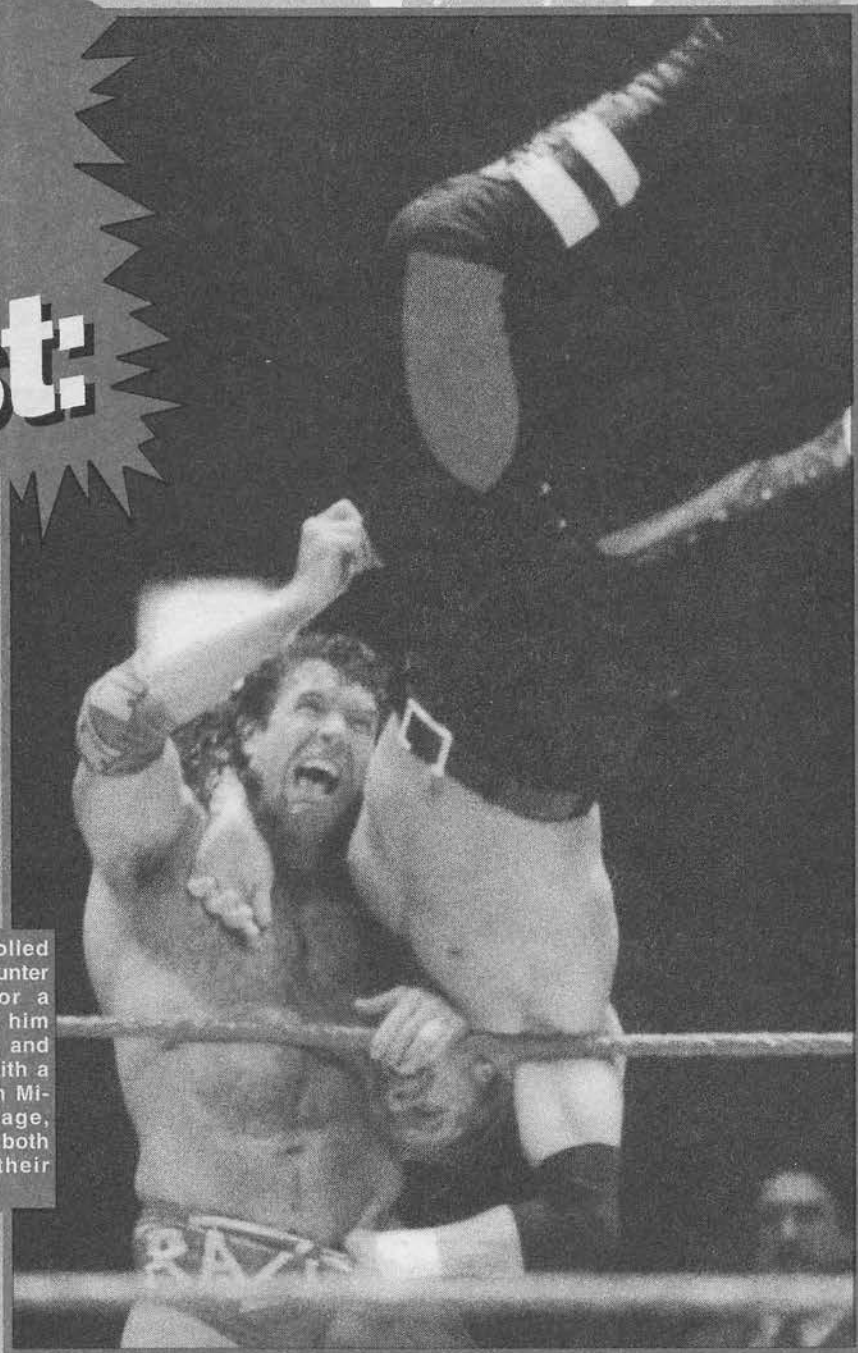
But there were and remain a number of problems with the six-man title.

•A lack of teams. It's hard enough finding two men who want

**Last
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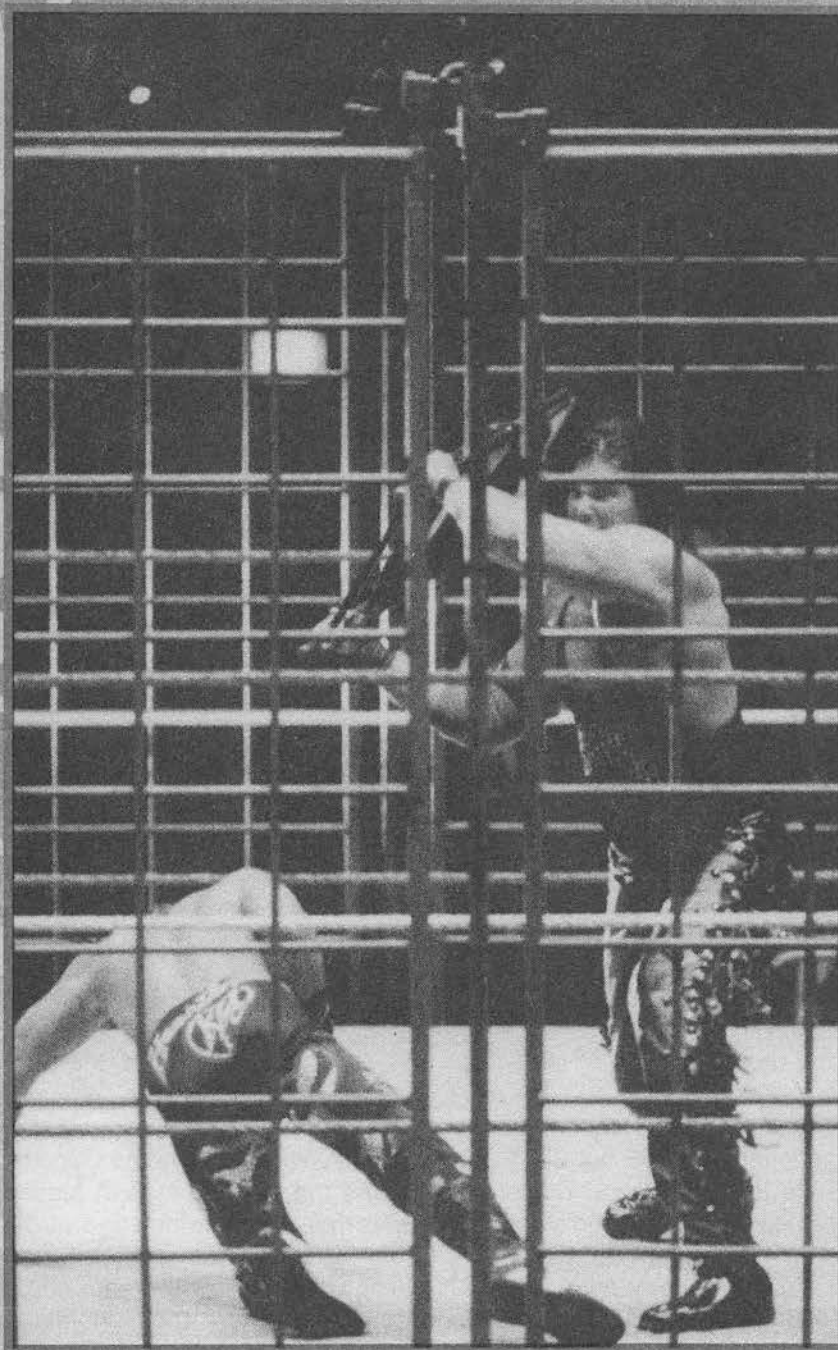
RAZOR &

Razor Ramon controlled his last match with Hunter Hearst Helmsley for a while and punished him with a suplex (right), and Diesel did damage with a chair against Shawn Michaels (opposite page, right), but they were both doomed to fail in their WWF finales.



VIOLENT FAREWELL

DIESEL'S



TO THE WWF!

It was no secret this spring that Razor Ramon and Diesel's WWF days were numbered. So when it came time for both to wrestle one last WWF match, Hunter Hearst Helmsley and Shawn gave them losses to remember the WWF by

By Bryan Ethier

NEW YORK CITY. May 19, 1996. It was like watching the series finale of a favorite TV program. It seems like the characters will always live before you in this 25-inch Sony world. You can't help but believe that they will always be a part of your life ... but that is the illusion of entertainment.

Such was the case on May 19 at Madison Square Garden. But unlike the protagonists and antagonists that create the illusion of reality via TV, two of this evening's characters were 14 feet of flesh and blood. How real were Diesel and Razor Ramon? So real that 19,000 faces all registered the same look of grief when they saw them.

For this was the final episode of the "Big Daddy Cool" and "Bad Guy" show. There was no poignant concluding "episode"; neither wrestler settled the conflicts that had dogged him during his final months in the WWF. And since each lost in a fittingly violent match (Hunter Hearst

Helmsley beat Razor with his "pedigree"; Shawn Michaels battered and toppled Diesel in a steel cage match), fans left the packed building bearing a sad and negative memory of these two longtime Titans.

When a buzzing Madison Square Garden quieted to a dull numbness, each wrestler left behind a proud legacy.

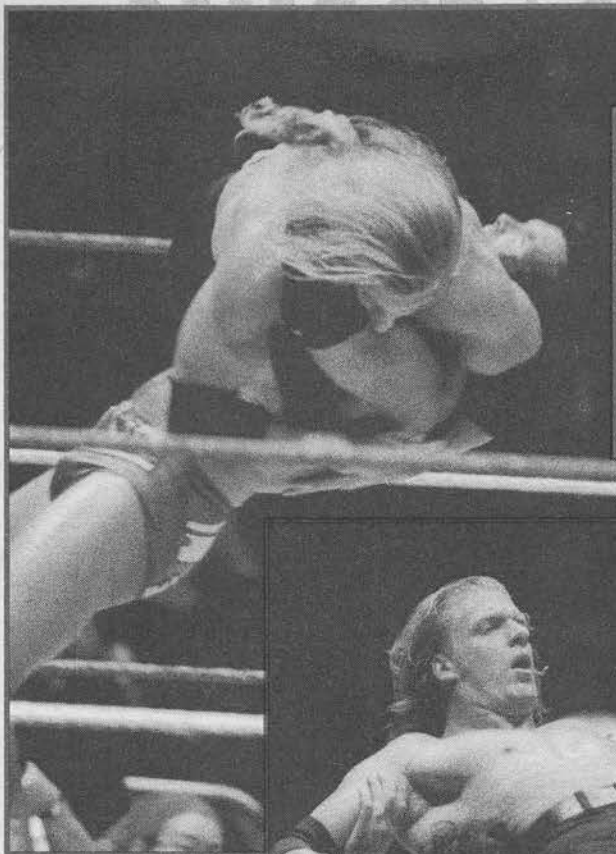
Diesel's 1995 season ranks among the best years registered by any pro wrestler in history. In seven months time, he captured the WWF World tag team title (with Shawn Michaels), the Intercontinental title, and the WWF World title. During his one-year reign as World heavyweight champ, Diesel was a proud and noble ambassador for the WWF—until he grew tired of being labeled a "good guy." He ultimately turned against everyone from Vince McMahon to longtime friend Michaels to Bret Hart. It was Hart who wrested the big belt from "Big Daddy Cool" in November 1995. He never got it back.

Ramon captured the Intercontinental belt four times, but he ultimately had neither the speed nor the mental sharpness to take him that one steep step up wrestling's ladder of champions. In fact, rather than pursue the WWF World title, he seemed more interested in furthering petty feuds with Goldust and The Kid. What he lacked in wrestling skills, Ramon certainly compensated for in swagger and back-street brawler charm.

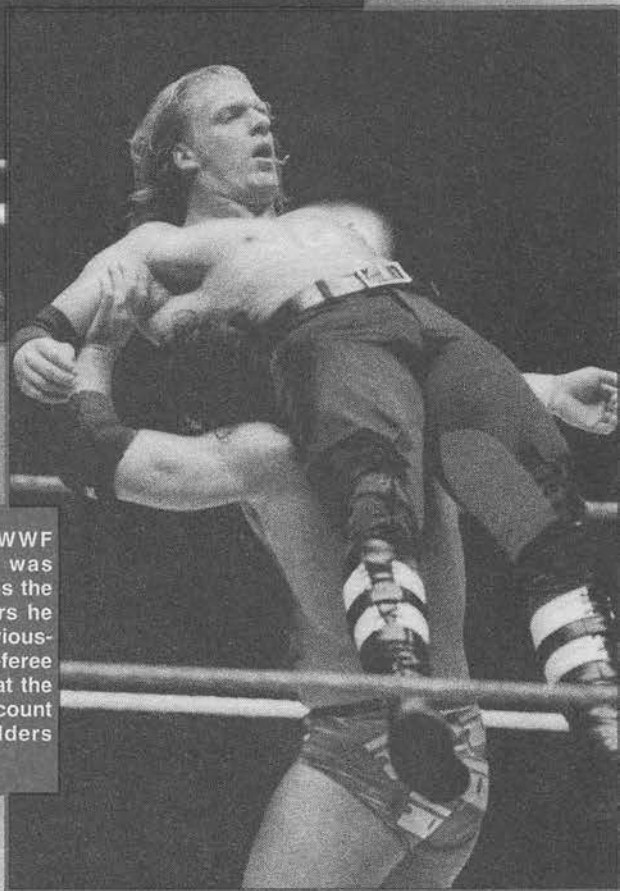
As the evening's wrestling card concluded, fans seemed stunned when it sunk in that these two huge wrestlers actually were leaving the WWF for WCW.

"I feel like they're traitors in a way," remarked Jeff Layalia, 17, a fan from Brooklyn. "It would be one thing to retire, but to go to WCW just to get the big money ... that shows no class. I'll miss seein' them here. I guess I gotta watch WCW and see how they do."

"It's a disturbing trend," admit-



Helmsley nearly got a fall against Ramon when he reversed this attempt at a body-slam. He did get a three-count later after using his "pedigree" on Ramon. Few inside the WWF were sad to see him lose on his way out.



Ramon's last WWF "Razor's Edge" was executed as well as the hundreds of others he had executed previously. Too bad the referee was knocked out at the time and couldn't count Helmsley's shoulders down afterward.

ted longtime WWF fan Bill Allen of State Island.. "Razor, Diesel both leaving the WWF. Who's next?"

• • •

WCW Monday Nitro. May 27, 1996. Who is next? That question may have been partially answered when a "stranger" emerged from the audience to take center stage during this live telecast.

Everybody knows who I am, he told the crowd, the hint of a Cuban accent flavoring each word. Where's "Billionaire Ted," he wanted to know. Where's "The Nacho

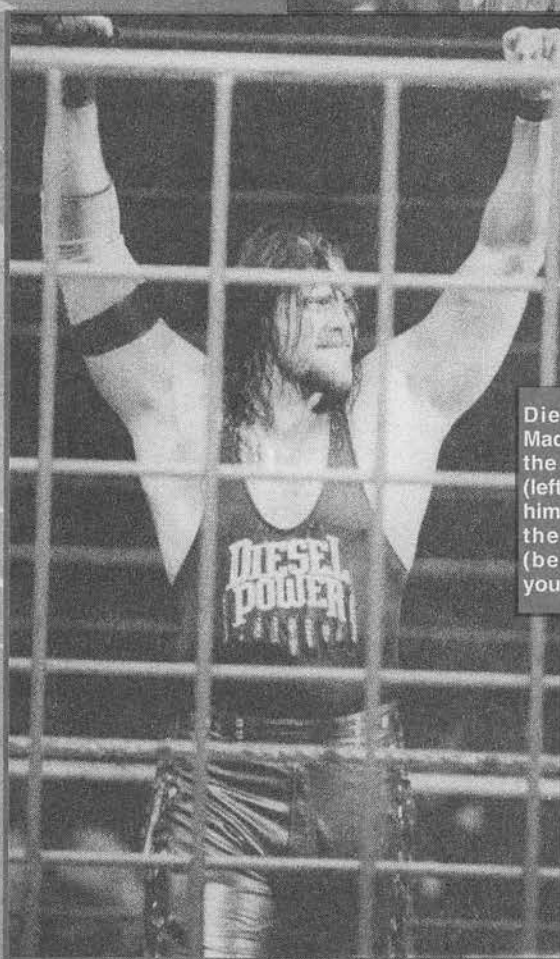
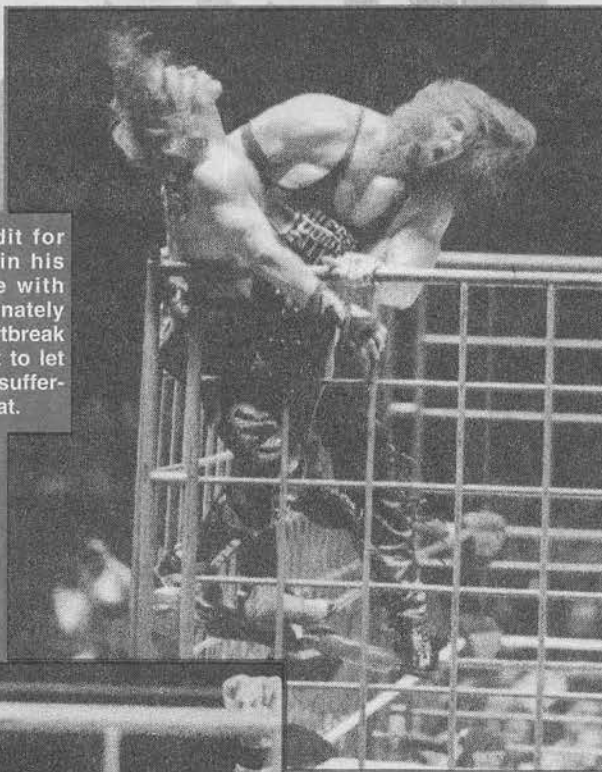
Man"? Where's "Scheme Gene"?

As the stunned fans in Macon, Georgia, stared wide-eyed at this 6'8" stranger from another wrestling world, a new program began to unfold before their unblinking eyes: *War Of The Worlds, Part II*.

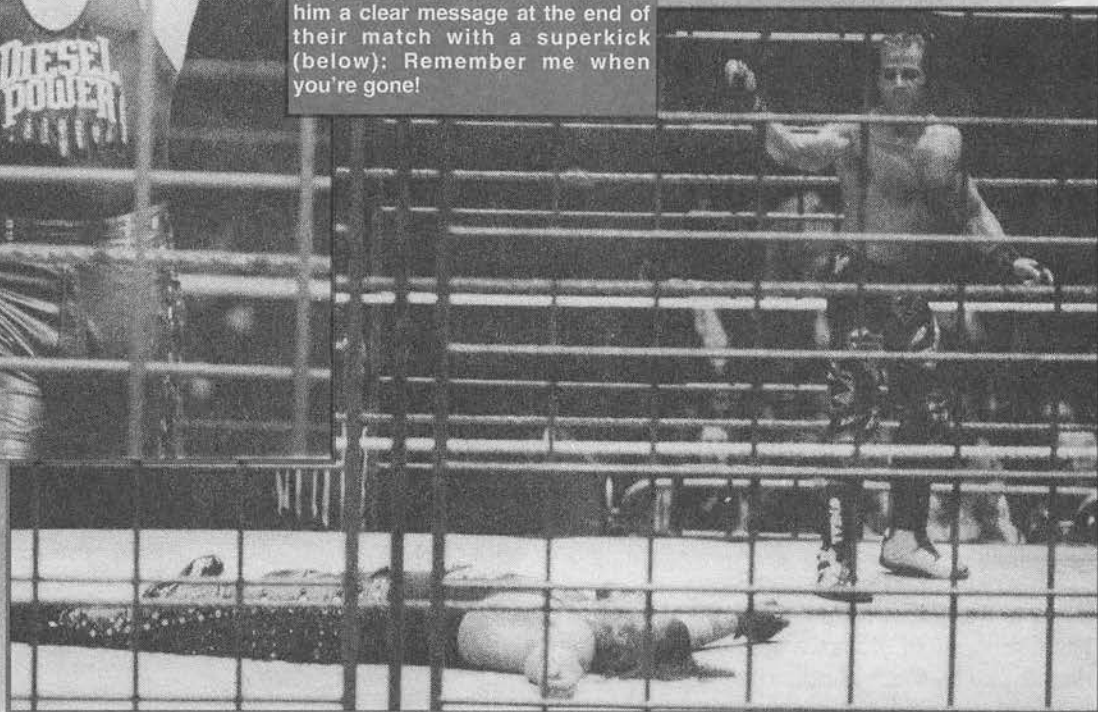
Not one of the fans had to utter the stranger's identity. They knew who this "Bad Guy" was. He was the head of the WCW's newest gang of nasties, the invaders from the WWF.

"You want a war?" he asked. "You got one!" Then he asked

Give Diesel credit for giving it his all in his final WWF battle with Michaels. Unfortunately for him, "The Heartbreak Kid" wasn't about to let him leave before suffering one more defeat.



Diesel saluted the unfriendly Madison Square Garden crowd on the night of his last WWF match (left), but it was Michaels who sent him a clear message at the end of their match with a superkick (below): Remember me when you're gone!



where "that Ken doll lookalike" was, a reference to WCW Senior Vice President Eric Bischoff.

That no other wrestler even dared to confront this invader of WCW turf proved just how ill-prepared the federation is for Razor Ramon. That's why mainstays such as Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, and Sting seem ready for the taking when Ramon, Diesel, and even Ted DiBiase enter this new arena.

"This could be a big problem," said Marcus Bagwell. "They think they can take over."

Will the arrival of Ramon, DiBiase, and Diesel have the profound effect wrestling insiders predict?

"It will if they can get some former buddies to align with them," warned WCW promoter Gary Juster. "If ex-WWF stars such as Luger and Savage join the ranks of these 'invaders,' you definitely could see WCW divided down the middle. And then cliques such as the Dungeon of Doom and the Horsemen would cease to exist. It would be the WCW wrestlers vs. WWF wrestlers."

And the WWF won't even have to be participate. □

Mabel's Tearful Confession:

Mabel and Mo-Men on a Mission—were an inseparable team until Mabel achieved his first major singles success. Mabel is only now realizing the error of their parting

By Dave Rosenbaum

IT SHOULD HAVE been the greatest night of his wrestling life, but on June 25, 1995, when Mabel won big, Men on a Mission lost bigger.

That night, Mabel defeated Savio Vega to win the WWF's King of the Ring tournament. It was a spectacular victory by this 503-pound beh-



DID MO WRONG! "

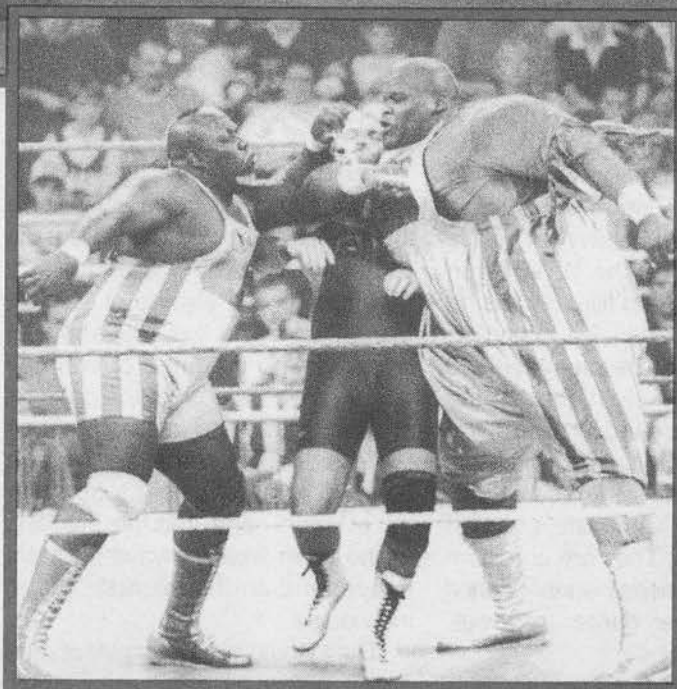


moth and marked the first significant singles victory of his career. But it may have marked the beginning of the end of Men on a Mission.

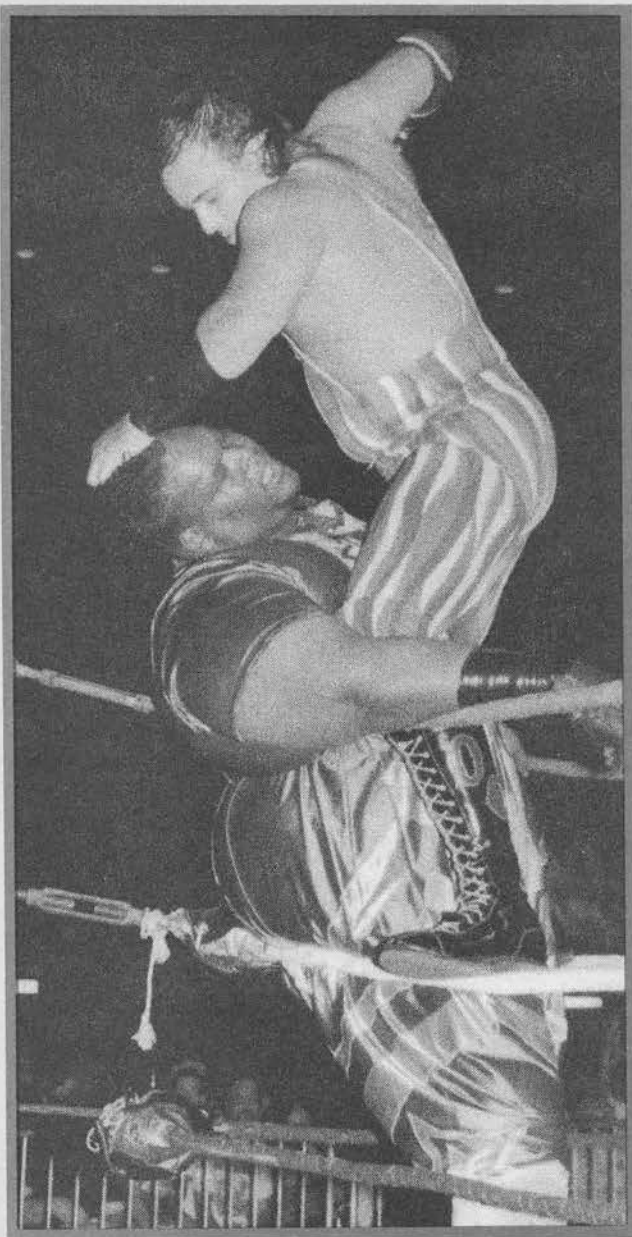
From that point on, Mabel's partnership with Mo, his longtime friend, suffered as Mabel pursued his singles career. It's a decision Mabel now calls "selfish" and seriously regrets.

"I didn't mean to, but I turned my back on my best friend," Mabel said. "When you turn your back on a friend, you get what's coming to you."

Maybe it didn't seem that way from appearances. Mabel's singles



Mabel accomplished a lot as a single in the USWA this year by overpowering opponents such as Doug Gilbert (above). All the while, though, Mo was longing for the days when the two of them could double-team opponents again (left).



It wouldn't be right to say Mo was not happy to see Mabel succeed on his own against men such as Gilbert. He was thrilled. It's just that he thought his friendship with Mabel meant more. Mabel just realized that Mo's right.

career thrived after he was crowned King of the Ring. He received shots at the WWF World heavyweight title and, after leaving the WWF, won the USWA Southern title. But, as he revealed in an exclusive interview, Mabel's personal life crumbled. He recalled long, lonely nights on the road as he pursued a career he quickly realized he didn't want.

"Nothing made sense without Mo," Mabel said as moisture formed in his dark eyes. They are soft, sensitive eyes that betray an innocence one would never gather from outward appearances.

"I did Mo wrong!" he confessed.

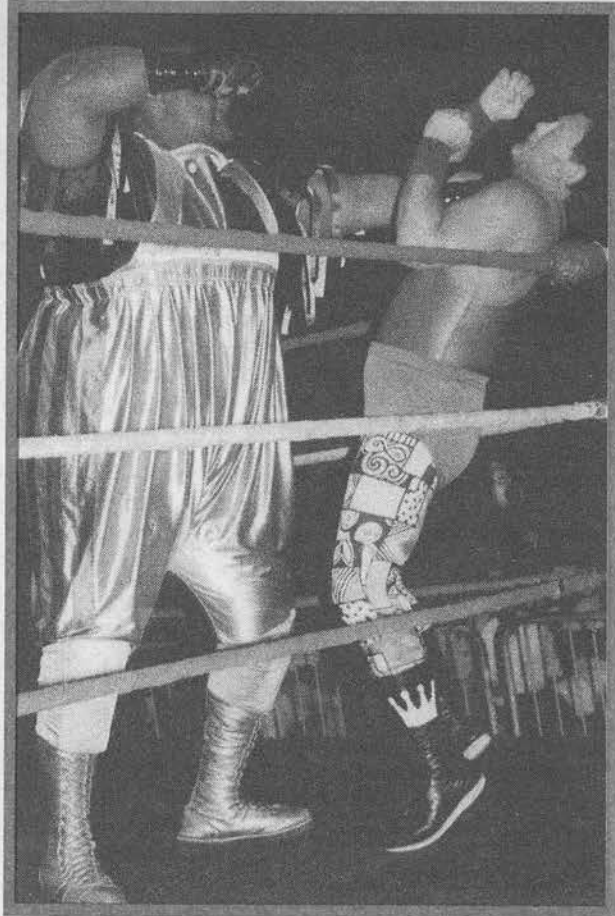
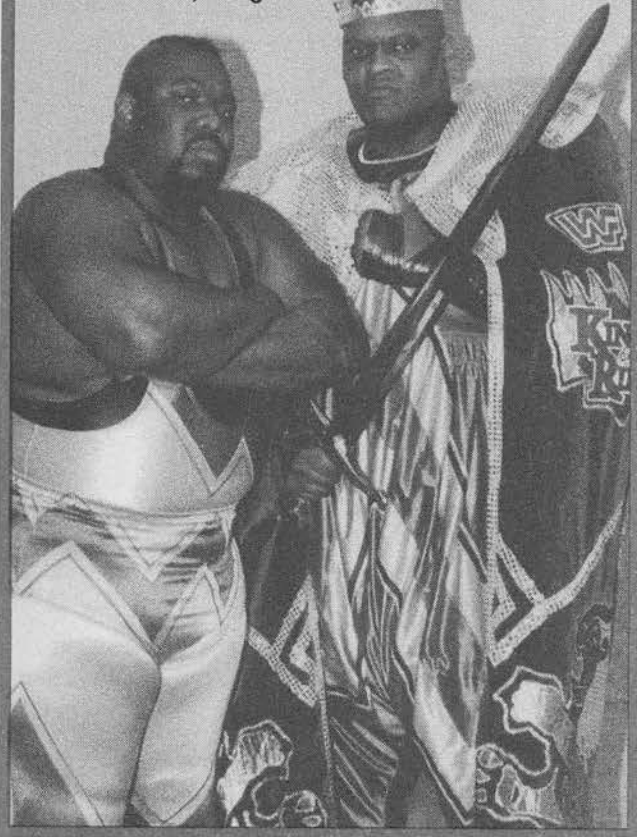
The betrayal, according to Mabel, was forgetting about an earlier vow the two of them had made to each other when they were fighting together on the streets of uptown Manhattan in the late-1980s. Mabel and Mo, who dreamed of one day fighting their way out of the poverty-stricken ghetto and into a career as professional wrestlers, vowed that they would always fight together—never apart—and that the interests of the team would always be more important than the interests of the individuals.

They would avoid temptation and stick together as a duo at all times;

they ultimately settled on the name Men on a Mission. Indeed, Mabel and Mo were on a mission much larger than wrestling. It was a mission of fulfillment.

"I know that I never could've gotten to this point if not for Mo, and he couldn't have gotten to this point without me," Mabel continued after composing himself. "But when I won that damn King of the Ring tournament, I said it was a victory for both of us. It was like we both won the match. I guess I didn't realize that I was turning my back on Mo, but then when I was fighting for the USWA title, that's when I really

When Mabel was crowned WWF King of the Ring last summer, he told Mo it was a victory for both of them. That's not what it turned out to be, though.



Shortly after Mabel and Mo arrived in the USWA early this year, Mabel declared war on Jerry Lawler and attacked him mostly in singles matches. From now on, he plans to enlist Mo's help in every feud in which he gets involved.

turned my back on him."

Mo said there were never any hard feelings and there was no reason for Mabel to apologize. He said he did consider Mabel's singles accomplishments to be a team victory, but privately wondered where Men on a Mission was headed.

"When we won the WWF tag team title in 1994, I thought we were headed somewhere," Mo said. "Both of us thought we were on the verge of something special. When Mabel started concentrating more on singles, the tag team was kind of forgotten, and I was wondering if we'd ever be able to pick up again."

Mo continued having those thoughts as he and Mabel started appearing separately on USWA cards: Mabel in singles matches, Mo in singles and occasionally with other partners.

"The thing was, I didn't want

another partner," Mo said. "I wanted Mabel."

The realization came later for Mabel, who says he was "too caught up in my own selfish agenda." He says he should have realized it earlier.

Then one day, Mabel was at a bookstore in downtown Memphis. He was paging through a magazine when he noticed that Mo was also in the store, one they used to frequent together when they first came to Memphis. It was an accidental meeting, something that couldn't have happened a year ago, when they were always together.

Mabel realized he had lost track of his friend's life. They were still pals, but they were no longer as close as they had once been.

"We looked at each other, and I said to Mo, kind of embarrassed, 'What would you say about getting

Men on a Mission back together full-time?'" Mabel recalled. "He said, 'I'm there, man.'"

The reunion is only partially complete. Although Mabel and Mo have wrestled together on USWA cards, Mabel remained busy with his singles career. But the reunion might be complete sometime this summer, when Mabel and Mo may be headed to WCW as a full-time tag team.

According to Mabel, their timing in the ring is off a little bit because of a long time between matches together.

"It used to be we were in sync all the time," Mabel said. "It's gonna take some time to get that back."

For now, they have all the time in the world. Men on a Mission is back, and their mission to rule the tag team world no longer seems so impossible. □

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

lot to prove before he earns my respect. Yeah, Michaels squeaked by Diesel and he is dealing with Davey Boy Smith, but could he score decisive victories over Vader, Yokozuna, The Undertaker, or The Ultimate Warrior? I doubt it very much.

In spite of the hype, I think Michaels is a joke as the WWF World champ. He is tarnishing the prestige of the belt so proudly worn by legends like Sammartino and Hogan. I will readily admit that Michaels deserves to the 1996 pinup king of the year, but he has a mighty long way to go before he can claim to be one of wrestling's greatest.

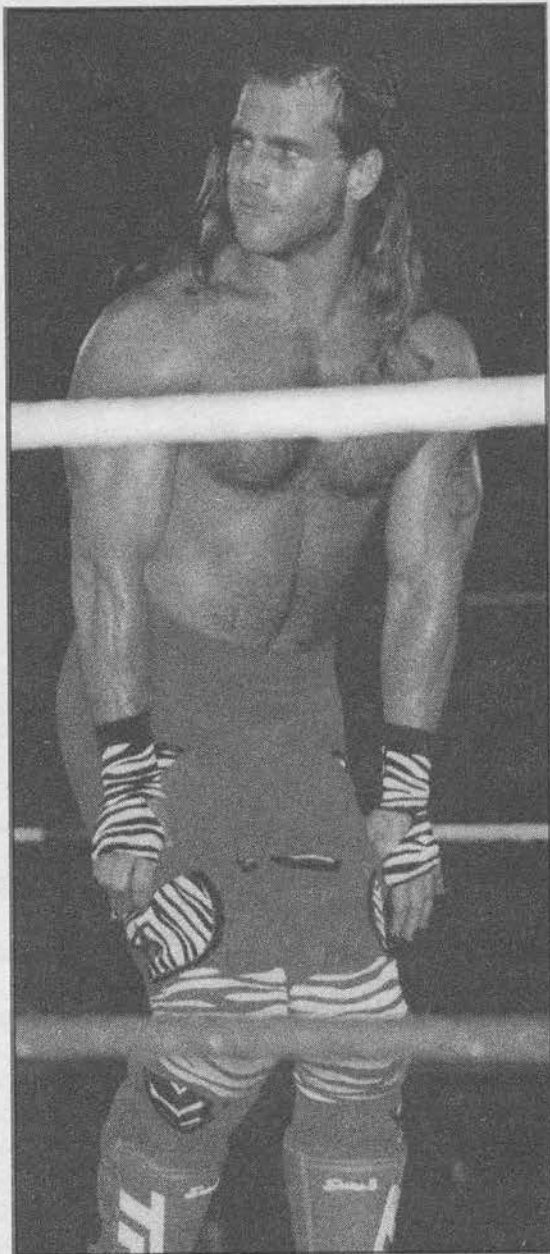
MIKE FACCIANI

Johnstown, PA

WE DON'T KNOW, EITHER

Whatever happened to wrestling being a sport of pure talent and skill? Why has it turned into vicious brawls like in Extreme Championship Wrestling, or showboating and favoritism for certain athletes in WCW and WWF? When did garbage men, ballet dancers, toothpickers, clowns, schizophrenics, and a movie-obsessed, golden-haired, gender-bending Texas wrestler have a place in wrestling?

I am tired of seeing low-talent losers walking around with championship belts. When will we see real wrestlers like Bret Hart, Owen Hart, Jeff Jarrett, and Bob Backlund reign over this sport again?



In spite of his success in recent months, Shawn Michaels is still having a hard time convincing some, like reader Mike Facciani, that he is more than just a "pretty boy."

Have we handed his sport to muscle-bound morons and flashy-dressed pansies? For the love of wrestling, I hope not.

PAUL JONATHAN SAGUIL

Toronto, Ontario ☐

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Inside Wrestling

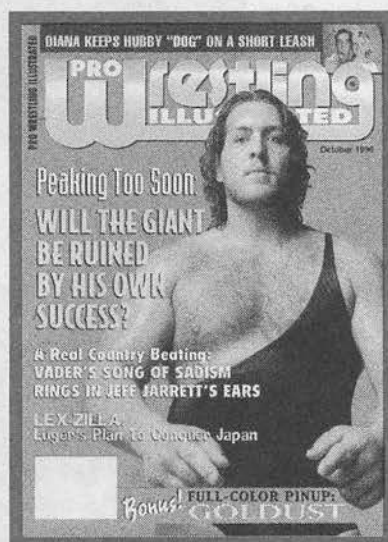


Think **SUNNY** is just a pretty face and a killer body? No way! She couldn't have come as far as she has without being intelligent. But we wanted to know how smart she was—so we gave her an intelligence test. Did she pass? She did more than that! ... How do you think **911** would do, choke-slam vs. choke-slam, against **THE GIANT**? He thinks he'd do great. That's why he's practically begging for a match with the WCW champ ... Did you know **BRIAN PILLMAN** nearly died in an April auto accident? He tells all about his near-death experience in "Hotseat"!

All this—and much more!—in the September 1996 issue of **Inside Wrestling**

NOW ON SALE!

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED



Has **THE GIANT** peaked too soon? He's the first rookie to win a world title, but will this early success hurt him in the long run?

We'll tell him what he needs to guard against to see that it doesn't ... **DIANA SMITH** has been involved in plenty of controversy involving **SHAWN MICHAELS**, but we bet you didn't know **DAVEY BOY** was afraid to negotiate with **SUNNY** because of her! ... **BIG VAN VADER** hates **JEFF JARRETT**, but he never could get his hands on him in the WWF. That's why he challenged him in the USWA ... Don't miss our full-color centerfold of **GOLDUST**!

All this—and much more!—in the October 1996 issue of **Pro Wrestling Illustrated**

NOW ON SALE!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)

"Let them do whatever they want and cheer for whoever they want," Lawler told me. "I want belts, and I want money. Those are the two most important things in the world to me!" ... **Tekno Team 2000** has returned to the WWF ... **Bobby and Woody Lee** won the Motor City Wrestling tag team belts from **Johnny Paradise** and **Scotty Summers** ... **Steve Smyth** and **Dan Steel**, who comprised the tag team known as **Hardened Steel** in the Trans World Wrestling Federation, have split up and are now feuding ... **Typhoon** and **Earthquake** (a.k.a. WCW's **Shark**) are talking about reforming their team. Known as **The Natural Disasters**, the two held the WWF World tag team title for three months in 1992.

Sgt. Slaughter, **Tito Santana**, and **Bob Orton** are just a few of the stars heading to Russia to wrestle on a tour organized by the American Wrestling Federation ... North East Wrestling officials are considering suspending **Abbudah Singh** for cutting **Tony DiVi-to's** hair after their match in April. Singh's manager, **Eddie Reality**, who helped Singh do the cutting, says he isn't worried about what anyone in NEW thinks. "This federation needs Abbudah more than he needs them," Reality told me. "He packs the fans into those

seats. If he leaves, nobody will want to see a North East Wrestling card. They will die a miserable promotional death!" I think Reality ought to be worried, because one NEW official told me Reality might be suspended, too!

"You have to know the basics before you can take it to the extreme," Taz said.

WWWA heavyweight champion **Nikolai Volkoff** is feuding with **Bam Bam Bigelow** ... **Scott Norton** and **Ice Train** (a.k.a. **Fire and Ice**) are trying to convince me that they are the best team in WCW. "Make that the best team in the world!" bel-lowed Norton. "**The Nasty Boys**, **Sting** and **Luger**, **Public Enemy**, **The Road Warriors**, the **Stein-ers**, **Harlem Heat**—you say they are in our class?"

It doesn't matter what I say, Mr. Norton. All you have to do to be recognized as the best is beat them. That's what's so wonderful about professional wrestling.

Luna Vachon cornered me at a TWWF card in Northampton, Pennsylvania, recently and practically forced me to print the following warning: "Tell everyone that although I am desired by men all over the world, it is still **The Vampire Warrior** who owns my heart. Tell your male readers to stop writing those disgusting love letters to me. My mind will not change. I will

rest in eternity with my Vampire!"

If any of you guys out there have actually sent Luna love letters, I'm telling you to heed that warning. You don't want Luna on your bad side (or your good side, for that matter).

That's what's happening. I'll see you at the matches! □



Don't mess with this happy couple, guys. Luna Vachon wants all her male admirers out there to stop sending those embarrassing love letters to her. She's happily married to Vampire Warrior.

Taz and **Perry Saturn** (of **The Eliminators**) are both now instructors at ECW's Long Island-based training center called House of Hardcore. Just because the teachers make their living in ECW, don't be misled into thinking they teach their students how to hit opponents with frying pans.

NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

cal characters that were featured on *WWF Monday Night Raw* during the first three months of this year.

Then it hits me. Not only an idea for my column, but also the primary reason for my creative drought.

I miss "Billionaire Ted."

I'll admit that I was one of the minions who faithfully tuned into *Raw* to see the latest antics of the money man and his cohorts, "The Huckster," "The Nacho Man," and "Scheme Gene." The continuing storyline showed the kind of tongue-in-cheek creativity that had been lacking in wrestling for a long time.

Creativity and originality have always been in short supply in this sport of kings. The Road Warriors begat Demolition, The Ultimate Warrior begat The Renegade, and Doink begat more Doinks than anyone can count. That's why the "Billionaire Ted" adventures were such a breath of fresh air. Sure they took cheap shots at Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage and were borderline tasteless. Sure they had nothing to do with wrestling.

But I still miss "Billionaire Ted."

Eric Bischoff sat behind his microphone for months berating his competition, even going so far as to reveal results of taped *Raw* matches that had not yet aired. McMahon finally responded, not with verbal barbs, but with quality

and creative productions featuring a bumbling, Jimmy Stewart-like Ted Turner lookalike character.

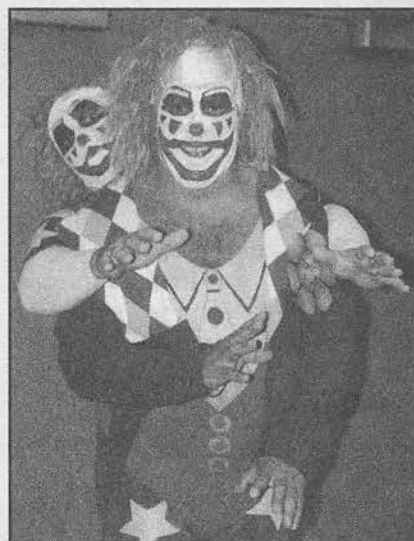
But all that is gone now. At press time, it had been two months since Vince put the troublesome troupe to sleep. One can only hope for a video vignette with a shower scene featuring "Billionaire Ted," "Huckster," and "Nacho," a la Bobby Ewing in the old TV show *Dallas*. Maybe "Huckster" and "Nacho" didn't really die in their geriatric match at *WrestleMania*. But it seems that Vince has picked up the gauntlet that he threw down earlier this year.

And here I sit, missing "Billionaire Ted."

Many long for the low-glitz old days of wrestling, before the days of monthly pay-per-views and heavy duty merchandising. I find myself reminiscing about early-1996. Remember those days? It was a time of wide-eyed innocence. Randy Savage's Slim Jims were snapping instead of his mind. Ric Flair ... no Randy Savage ... no Ric Flair was WCW World champion. We weren't even close to experiencing the tag team dynasty known as the Godwinns.

Hoping against hope, I dream of the day when the motley WCW-like crew will return to WWF TV. But alas, I realize that this is just a fantasy.

And now the war between the WWF and WCW has escalated



Steve Anderson laments the short supply of creativity and originality in wrestling today. Weren't the Doink days of the WWF bad enough? Looking back at the lack of creativity makes Anderson long to see "Billionaire Ted" again.

beyond what anyone would have expected. Ex-WWFers Ramon and Diesel, with more likely to follow, are invading WCW. Ramon, when he returned on May 27, sounded like he was representing the WWF in the WWF-WCW war.

Boy, do I miss "Billionaire Ted."

WCW Big Cheese Eric Bischoff is obviously not quite sure how to handle this. Before, all he had to worry about was video skits making fun of his boss. Maybe he wondered why there wasn't a character created to make fun of him. "Earache Brushoff," perhaps? Now he has to contend with legitimate physical threats from invading wrestlers, not jokes from script writers. And those wrestlers are the ones whose match results he had been revealing.

The next few months will prove to be interesting for most. But I will continue to look outside my window, watching ... waiting ... hoping for that day when Vince will give the high sign as another edition of *Raw* comes to a close. Things just aren't the same.

I think Eric Bischoff misses "Billionaire Ted," too. ☐

TOP 10 LEAST POPULAR WRESTLING MERCHANDISE ITEMS

10. The Godwinns' powdered slop
9. *What's Big Bubba's Latest Identity?* children's book
8. Mankind finger puppet
7. Malibu Jim Cornette action figure
6. Paul Bearer's "I'm A Mortician" play set
5. Anything from "Hard Work" Bobby Walker University
4. "Locker Room After A Night of Sweaty Matches" colorform set
3. Sunny in a snowsuit poster
2. The Gambler all-over T-shirt
1. Uncensored: the video game

CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)

much, and the fans cheered loudly as he kept right on fighting. He and Caras traded punches for a while. By the time the match reached its latter stages, many tables and chairs had been thrown into the ring and broken. Every "lumberjack," it seemed, had found some sort of weapon and was using it on someone else. Finally, Konnan, who also had a large cut on his face, decided he had had enough of the mayhem. He pinned Pierroth after power-bombing him through a table.

In other bouts: Kharis la Momia, Killer, & Black Mask beat Blue Demon Jr., Mascara Sagrada Jr., & Torrero in a best-of-three-falls match ... Jerry Estrada & Juventud Guerrera beat Super Calo & Pantera ... Zibernetico, El Picudo, & Mosco Mosquito beat La Parka, Octagon, & Ultimo Dragon.

Philadelphia, PA (Correspondent—David Langa): Both 2 Cold Scorpio and Shane Douglas heard cheers as they came to the ring for their match, but one fan taunted Douglas by holding up a WWF T-shirt. That distraction didn't stop Douglas from gaining the upper hand early on by applying a leglock.

The two men went on to trade holds for a while in this fast-paced bout before brawling their way into the crowd. Douglas power-bombed 2 Cold on the floor, but Scorpio came back and kicked Douglas in the groin, then moonsaulted onto him. A beautifully executed superkick left Douglas stunned.

But he, too, proved to be very resilient. After kicking Scorpio through the ropes, he suplexed him, then missed with a kneedrop. Scorpio came back with another superkick and another moonsault. After connecting with a somer-



Shane Douglas and 2 Cold Scorpio started out wrestling scientifically against each other during a recent match in Philadelphia. Douglas, however, ultimately won after the match moved outside the ring.

sault splash, Scorpio got a two-count, but Shane again fought back. He suplexed his cocky opponent two more times. Then Scorpio surprised Douglas by ducking one of his moves and choke-slammng him. He thought one more splash would give him a win, but Douglas was ready for him. He foiled 2 Cold's attempt and used a top-ropc belly-to-belly suplex to get the pin and win Scorpio's ECW TV title.

After the match, Douglas demanded that Scorpio strap the belt around his waist for him. Instead of doing that, Scorpio hit him with the belt, then piledrived him. Douglas was carried away from the ring on a stretcher.

In other bouts: Devon Storm & Damien Kane defeated Bubba Ray & D-Von Dudley ... J.T. Smith & Little Guido beat Hack Myers & Axl Rotten ... Taz beat Beef Wellington ... ECW champ Raven defeated The Sandman and Pit Bull II in a three-way match ... Chris Jericho pinned Mikey Whipwreck ... Rob Van Dam pinned Sabu ... Tommy Dreamer & The Gangstas beat Brian Lee & The Eliminators. □

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[NOTE: Cover stories noted in boldface.]

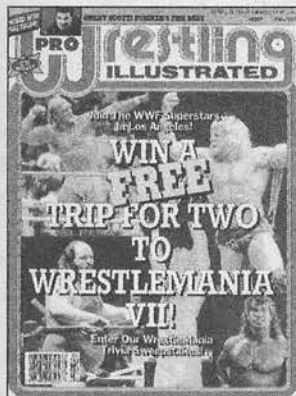
February 1988/CENTERFOLD: Ronnie Garvin. **Savage & Elizabeth**, Garvin, Von Erichs, Freebirds.

April 1989/CENTERFOLD: Rick Steiner. **Randy Savage**, Ted Turner, Richter, Paul E., Powers of Pain.

December 1990/CENTERFOLD: Sting. **New WWF Blood**, Four Horsemen, Kerry, Doom, Gilbert, Slaughter.

January 1991/CENTERFOLD: Kerry Von Erich. **WWF vs. NWA**, Hogan, Hansen, Sting, Sherri & Warrior.

February 1991/CENTERFOLD: 1991 calendar. **WrestleMania**, Vicious, DiBiase-Rhodes, Steiner, Power & Glory.



May 1991/CENTERFOLD: Arn Anderson. **Hulk Hogan**, Rude, Flair, Sting, Thesz.

June 1991/CENTERFOLD: Hacksaw Duggan. **Hulk Hogan**, Cactus, Flair, Nasty Boys, Steiner.

January 1993/CENTERFOLD: Jeff Jarrett. **Flair/Summerslam**, Simmons by Bowden, Von Erich interview.

February 1993/CENTERFOLD: Curt Hennig. **Ramon**, Snuka-Muraco, Rude, Rhodes, Roberts interview.

April 1993/CENTERFOLD: Barry Windham. **Steiners**, Backlund, Sting-Muta, Hawk-Sasaki.

November 1993/CENTERFOLD: The Steiners. **WCW Midyear Report**, Doink, Funk-Gilbert, Race, Yokozuna.

January 1994/CENTERFOLD: Jerry Lawler. **Doink**, Nasty Boys, Steiners, Cornette, Vicious.

May 1994/CENTERFOLD: Tatanka. **Yokozuna-Luger**, Flair-Vader, Heenan, WrestleMania retrospective.

July 1994/CENTERFOLD: Rick Steamboat. **Razor Ramon**, Flair-Regal, Cactus, Lawler, Yokozuna workout.

August 1994/CENTERFOLD: Doink & Dink. **Bret Hart/WrestleMania X**, Steiners, Albano, steroid trial.

November 1994/CENTERFOLD: Randy Savage. **Hogan In WCW**, Cactus, Yokozuna, Lawler, Michaels, Jake.

Winter 1994/CENTERFOLD: Terry Funk. **Hulkamania Wild Again**, McMahon, Vicious, AAA, Flair.

January 1995/CENTERFOLD: Razor Ramon. **Tatanka**, Hogan, Alundra, ECW vs. NWA, Brian Lee.

February 1995/CENTERFOLD: Johnny B. Badd. **WCW Civil War**, Pillman & Austin, Abdullah, Bret Hart.

April 1995/CENTERFOLD: Sabu. **WWF Title Turmoil**, Hogan, Cornette, Diesel, Alundra, Rhodes.

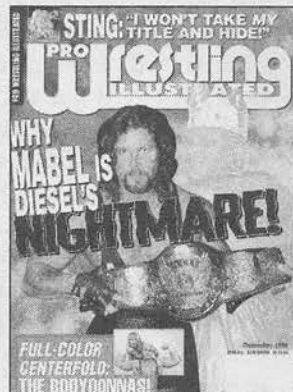
May 1995/CENTERFOLD: Sting. **Diesel**, Savage, Sabu, Hogan-Beefcake, Vader, Owen Hart.

July 1995/CENTERFOLD: Bam Bam Bigelow. **Hulk Hogan**, Sullivan, USWA blood, Yokozuna, revitalize the WWF.

August 1995/CENTERFOLD: Big Van Vader. **Women In Wrestling**, Rottens, Sting-Hogan, Road Warriors.

October 1995/CENTERFOLD: Harlem Heat. **Razor Ramon**, ideal WWF champ, Flair, Savage, Orndorff.

November 1995/CENTERFOLD: Hulk Hogan. **Summerslam**, Vader, Michaels, Backlund, North Korea, ECW rules.



December 1995/CENTERFOLD: Bodydonnas. **Diesel-Mabel**, Sting, Yokozuna, Savio, Regal-Eaton, Lawler-LeDuc.

January 1996/CENTERFOLD: Arn Anderson. **WWF vs. WCW**, Diesel & Shawn, Luger, Summerslam.

February 1996/CENTERFOLD: Shawn Michaels. **Randy Savage**, Hogan, Gangstas-Public Enemy, Austin.

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(Continued from page 16)

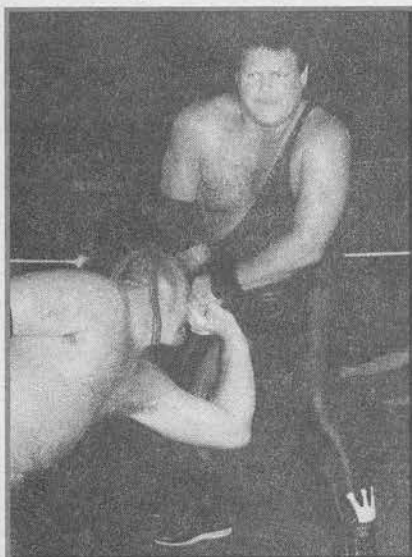
on a WCW card in Florida recently. Everyone knows you beat her many times in the WWF. Why have you targeted her again?" — Reggie Barnes, Augusta, GA

- A: "I consider it my destiny to destroy Madusa," Nakano said through an interpreter. "Wherever she goes, I want her to know that I am watching. She came to Japan a few years ago thinking she would beat me in front of my people, but I humiliated her. Then she thought she'd get revenge in America, but I beat her there, too. I proved I am a superior athlete. While she fights cowards like that Col. Parker, I fight the best athletes in Japan. She is not the best female athlete in the world. I am! And I will always enjoy proving that to her."

...

- Q: "I have a question for Brian Christopher: What do you think of Jerry Lawler turning his back on his Memphis fans?" —Randy Mazzilli, Paragould, AR

- A: "Doesn't surprise me," said Christopher. "He sold out. The



Jerry Lawler (applying a wristlock on Jesse James Armstrong) is now a rule-breaker in both the WWF and USWA. Brian Christopher wasn't surprised Lawler turned his back on his Memphis fans.



Stevie Richards, Raven, and The Blue Meanie during happier times with Kimona Wana-Laya. Richards says he is having the time of his life helping Raven. That doesn't mean he thinks he couldn't succeed on his own, though.

competition around here got too tough for him, so he had to do something big to get his luck turned around. It doesn't matter against me. I've got his number. I'll take him and his new attitude on any day of the week. He talks all about how titles are the only things that matter to him now. I hope that's something he doesn't regret saying one day, because he was once a real hero in Memphis, but he just threw that all away. I have a little more respect for the people down here, and if they want me to take him down, I'll do it. I wrestle for titles, too, but I also take a lot of pride in the way I wrestle."

...

- Q: "This question is for Stevie Richards: What is it about Raven that makes it so easy for him to recruit people to do his dirty work for him in ECW? He gets you, The Blue Meanie, The Bruise Brothers, and Brian Lee to fight a lot of his battles for him. Isn't it time someone as talented as you went out on his own?" —Sheila

Miller, Bryn Mawr, PA

- A: "You're real smart, Sheila," replied Richards. "I am really, really talented, and you're smart enough to figure that out. We all like helping out Raven because he's so great. He's the ECW champion because he's so tough and cool and everything. He's my hero! We have fun together. He lets us help him beat up on Tommy Dreamer and Shane Douglas and The Sandman, and we just love doin' that. Beulah and Kimona weren't good enough to hang around with us. That's why Raven got rid of 'em. But I get mad when people say I'm no good if I'm not hangin' out with Raven. I perfected my super-kick all by myself, and it's even better than Shawn Michaels' kick. I won a lot of matches on my own, too. I'm great, Raven's great, the Meanie's great—we're all great! Thank you very much!" ☐

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JUNE 1995



APRIL 1996

JULY 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING is a power-packed 88-pager (including four color pinups) that included our popular "Wrestling Cool" section. Who's the coolest dude, babe, cripple, and daredevil? One thing all our readers agreed on: This issue was cool!

OCTOBER 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING reports on the state of affairs of World Championship Wrestling for the first half of 1995 in "WCW Midyear Report." We tell you how the stars fared among the turmoil in this special 88-page edition that includes four full-color pinups.

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APRIL 1996 INSIDE WRESTLING presents the third edition of the Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament, and the results just get more startling each year! The highlight of this annual 88-page special, as our readers have told us, is the computer-generated centerfold action shot from the tournament final.

JULY 1996 INSIDE WRESTLING takes you away from the wrestling ring and into the personal lives of wrestling's hottest stars. What makes Sunny cry? What's Sabu's favorite TV show? What's the dumbest thing Shawn Michaels has ever done? What scares Jim Cornette? What brings Sting down? This 88-pager includes color shots of Sting, Sunny, Sabu, and Michaels.

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SCRAPBOOK

(Continued from page 33)

Rhodes; 4—Tully Blanchard; 5—Lex Luger; 6—Ronnie Garvin; 7—Barry Windham; 8—Arn Anderson; 9—Dick Murdoch; 10—Sam Houston.

AWA RATINGS: 1—Nick Bockwinkel; 2—Larry Zbyszko; 3—Scott Hall; 4—Col. DeBeers; 5—Jimmy Snuka; 6—Silo Sam; 7—Curt Hennig; 8—Johnny Rich; 9—Boris Zukhov; 10—Brad Rheingans.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Road Warriors; 2—The Rock 'n' Roll Express; 3—The British Bulldogs; 4—The Fantastics; 5—Ole & Arn Anderson; 6—The Midnight Express; 7—Buddy Rose & Doug Somers; 8—The Midnight Rockers; 9—Buzz Sawyer & Matt Borne; 10—John Tatum & Jack Victory.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1991

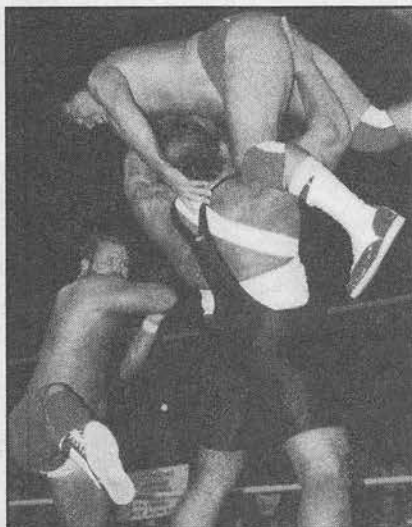
RIC FLAIR, A man whose name and career were synonymous with the National Wrestling Alliance, wrestled his first match in the WWF, defeating Jim Powers by submission to the figure-four leglock on September 10 in Cornwall, Ontario. On October 23, wrestling fans finally got to see their "NWA vs. WWF" dream match when WWF World champion Hulk Hogan wrestled former NWA World champion Flair for the first time in Dayton, Ohio. Flair won their initial bout by countout ... Chris Von Erich, 21, committed suicide by shooting himself with a nine-millimeter pistol in Edom, Texas, on September 12. He was the youngest of the Von Erich brothers and the fourth to die at a young age. Chris had made his pro wrestling debut just 15 months earlier ... Arn Anderson and Larry Zbyszko defeated Bill Kazmaier and Rick Steiner in the finals of a tournament to fill the vacant WCW World tag team title on September 5 in Augusta, Georgia. Former champi-

ons Rick and Scott Steiner had vacated the title when Scott suffered a torn left bicep muscle ... The popular Steve Doll regained the Pacific Northwest title from Billy Jack Haynes on September 14 in Portland ... The Ralston Purina Company put out a WWF Superstars cereal and even produced TV commercials for it that were broadcast on the West Coast ... Jerry Lawler defeated USWA heavyweight champion Dragon Master to win the title on September 2 in Memphis ... The Texas Outlaws defeated USWA tag team champs Jeff Jarrett and Robert Fuller to win the belts September 26, but they lost the belts back to Jarrett and Fuller on October 7 in Memphis ... The York Foundation—Thomas Rich, Richard Morton, and Terrence Taylor—defeated Dustin Rhodes, Tom Zenk, and Big Josh to win the WCW six-man title on October 8 in Montgomery, Alabama. Alexandra York's men were the last trio to hold the title before it was abandoned in November of that year ... Gene Anderson, 58, a former member of The Minnesota Wrecking Crew with his brother Ole died of a heart attack on October 31 while attend-

ing a law enforcement training class in Huntersville, North Carolina ... Brian Pillman defeated Richard Morton in the finals of a tournament to declare a WCW light heavyweight champion at Halloween Havoc '91 on October 27 in Chattanooga, Tennessee.



Brian Pillman uses all his strength to backslide Richard Morton. Pillman defeated Morton in the finals of a tournament to name a WCW light heavyweight champion.



Arn Anderson rushes to the aid of his partner, Larry Zbyszko, who is about to be press-slammed by Bill Kazmaier. "A & Z" beat Kazmaier and Rick Steiner to claim the vacant WCW World tag team title.

WWF RATINGS: 1—Hulk Hogan; 2—Bret Hart; 3—Ric Flair; 4—Randy Savage; 5—The Undertaker; 6—Irwin R. Schyster; 7—The Mountie; 8—Berzerker; 9—Jake Roberts; 10—Hacksaw Duggan.

WCW RATINGS: 1—Lex Luger; 2—Sting; 3—Ron Simmons; 4—Steve Austin; 5—Brian Pillman; 6—Bobby Eaton; 7—Dustin Rhodes; 8—Bill Kazmaier; 9—Van Hammer; 10—Cactus Jack.

TAG TEAMS: 1—The Enforcers; 2—The Legion of Doom; 3—The Natural Disasters; 4—The Patriots; 5—The Freebirds; 6—Chris Walker & Steve Simpson; 7—Robert Fuller & Jeff Jarrett; 8—The Young Pistols; 9—The Nasty Boys; 10—The Beverly Brothers. □

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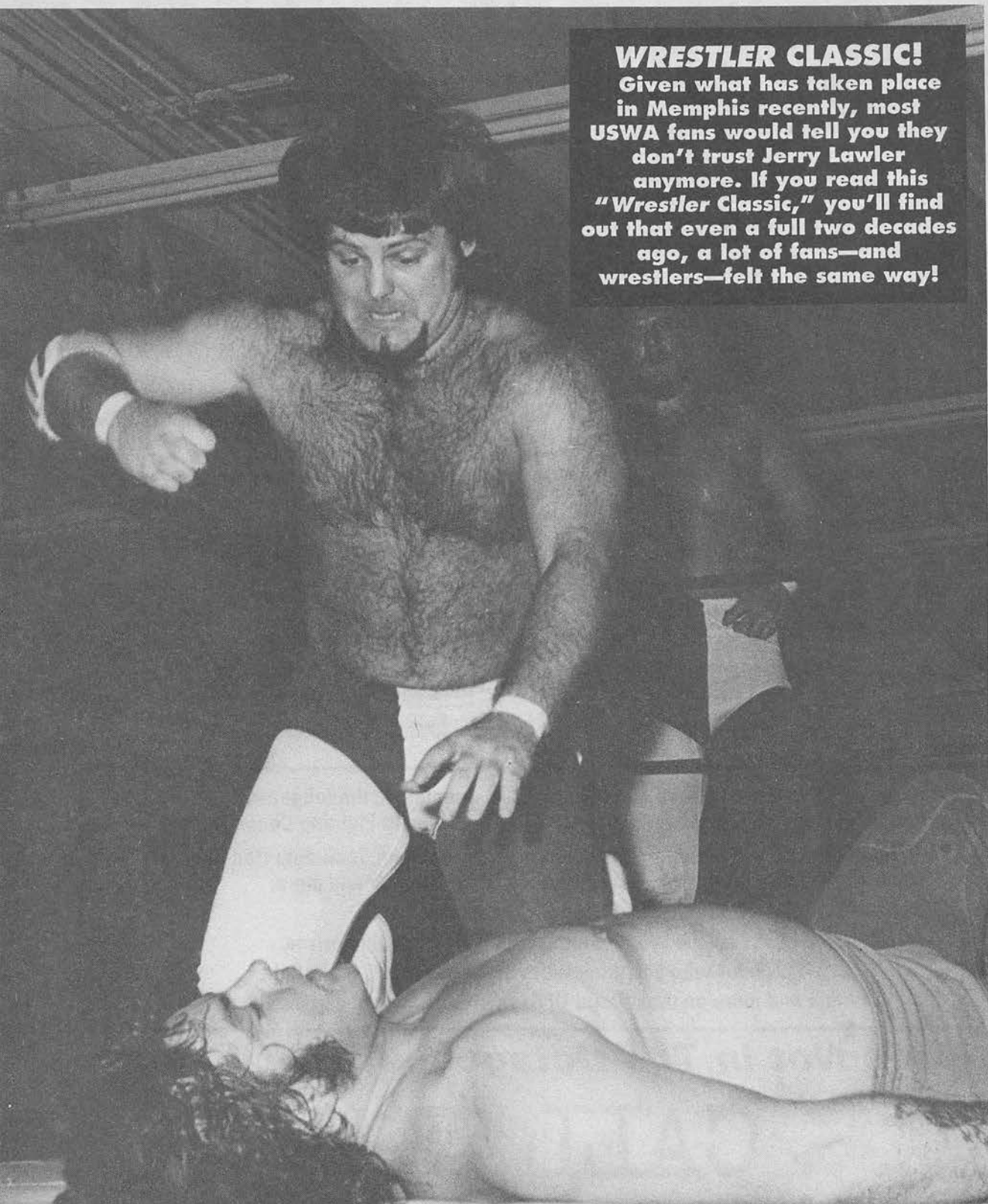
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DON'T EVER TU

WRESTLER CLASSIC!

Given what has taken place in Memphis recently, most USWA fans would tell you they don't trust Jerry Lawler anymore. If you read this "Wrestler Classic," you'll find out that even a full two decades ago, a lot of fans—and wrestlers—felt the same way!



No one expects mercy from Jerry Lawler. Other human decencies are also beyond him. You can count on him to be savage. You can also count on other wrestlers to seek bloody revenge!

TURN YOUR BACK ON JERRY LAWLER

THERE ARE TWO ways to get to the top. The first way is to use your God-given gifts to the best of your ability. The second way is stab in the back everyone between you and the summit.

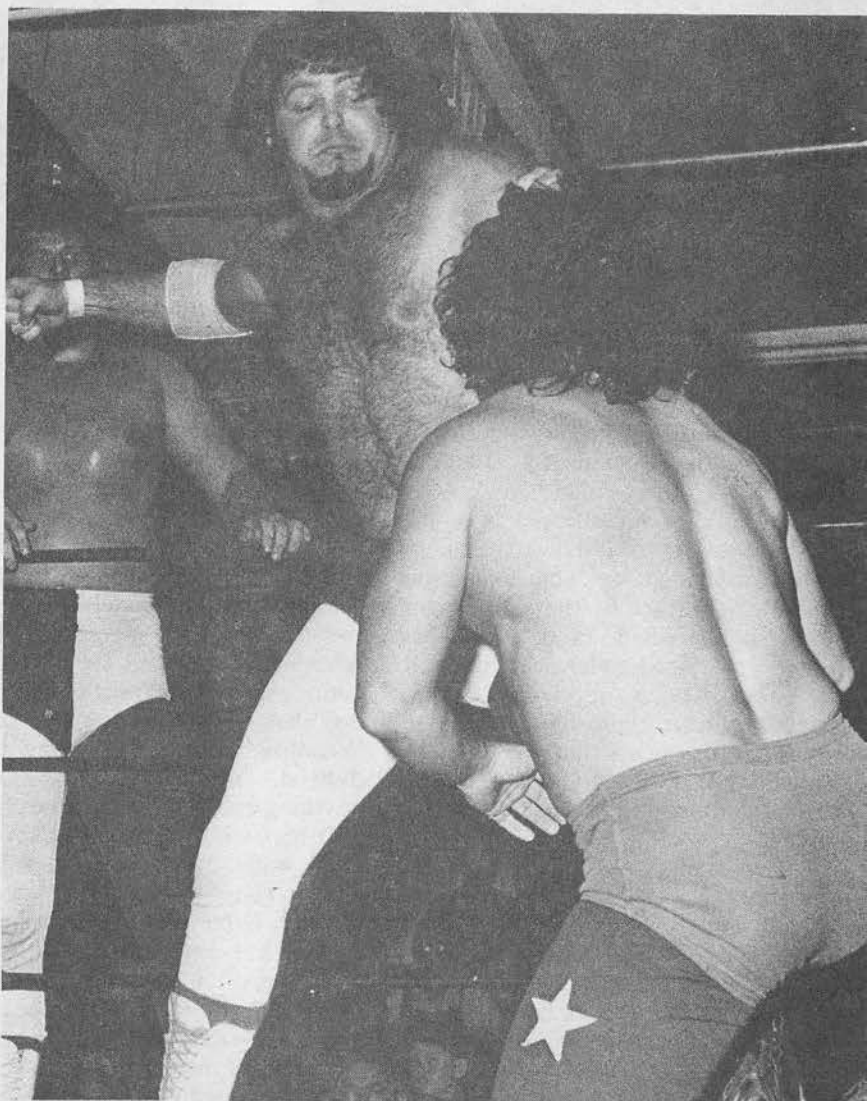
Jerry Lawler has gone for the shoulderblades from the first day he stepped into an arena. If anyone has been foolish enough to trust him, they've been rewarded by betrayal 10 times out of 10. As far as Lawler is concerned, it's him against the world, and the world better watch out.

It doesn't bother Jerry very much that he's considered the most untrustworthy man in wrestling. When confronted by the accusations of his colleagues, he merely laughs.

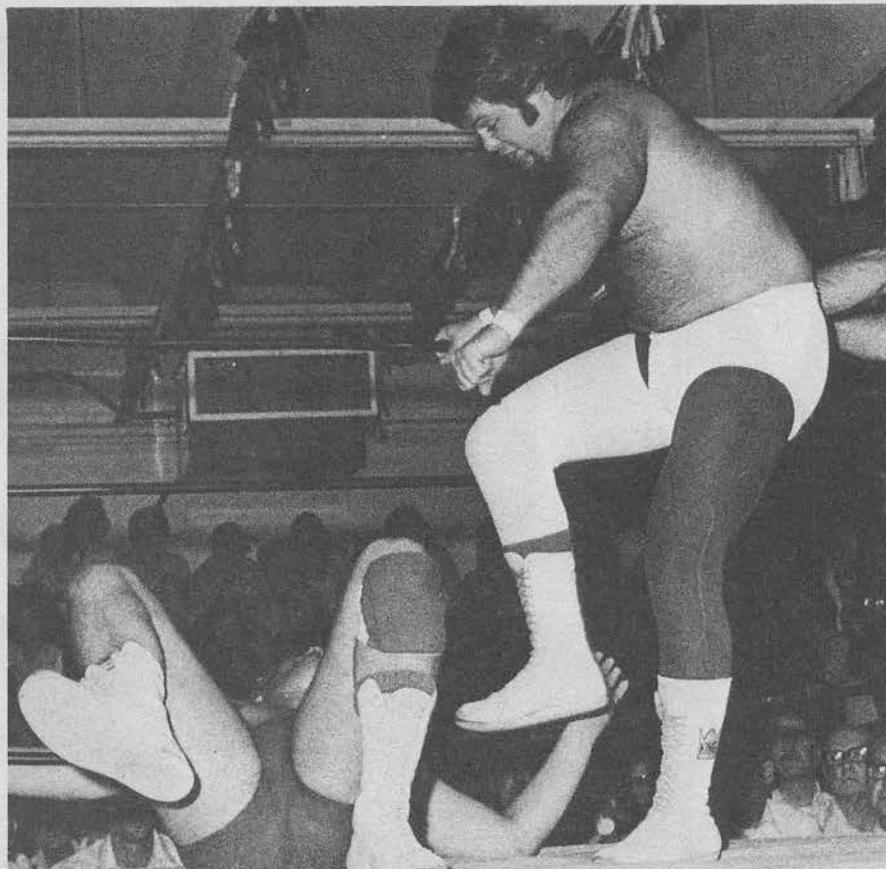
"Being popular," Lawler says, "don't mean a thing in dollars and cents. I'm in this to get as rich as I can in as short a time as humanly possible. If I wanted friends, they sure as hell wouldn't be a group of moronic wrestlers.

"Look around, clown. This is my home, fit for a rajah. I've got money in the bank and everything a man needs. When I get the NWA championship, I'll have everything a man wants. Am I supposed to care because some chumps don't trust me. Anyway, by the time they've realized what hit 'em, I'm saying goodbye. I'm on to bigger and better things. I'm a king and ruthless; they're betrayed and worthless."

Looking around Lawler's home, one has to wonder if cheating in fact does pay. His furnishings may be garish but they're expensive. He eats the best foods prepared by a *Cordon Bleu* chef.



Fist clenched and face set, Lawler prepares to smash a powerful roundhouse right into the face of a helpless opponent. At least this victim can see his tormentor; Lawler usually batters away at an opponent whose back is turned. Lawler wallows in his cruel savagery, bragging about the men who he has put in the hospital.



Lawler thinks nothing of using his feet as a weapon against his foe as he mercilessly stomps a man unable to move. That's typical for Jerry—rotten tactics coupled with a ruthlessly ugly ambition.

Few wrestlers live half as well. Many wrestlers have paid for Lawler's success with their blood.

The list of wrestlers Lewin has betrayed is long and heartbreaking. Many are no longer able to wrestle; others will never be the same again, their bodies shadows of what they once were. But Lawler does live well.

Those who've survived Lawler's treachery have sworn bloody revenge. Bob Armstrong is a man who has more reason than most to hate Lawler. He is also determined to end Jerry's reign of terror.

"Most fans," Armstrong explains, "don't realize how dangerous a sneak attack can be. Your body is relaxed, unprepared for any assault. You can sustain permanent injury very easily. Muscles can be torn, tendons ripped, and even internal organs damaged beyond repair. It's an accepted fact that a mediocre wrestler can destroy a great athlete with a well-executed sneak attack.

"Lawler is better than mediocre, which is why he's so dangerous. He

knows exactly what will hurt most and be the most damaging. I've been lucky against him—I've survived. Others haven't been that lucky.

"If this was the best of all possible worlds, I wouldn't be in the same state as Lawler. Unfortunately, I don't have the choice. I have a responsibility to wrestling, to protect the young men coming up and the sport's integrity. To do that, I must destroy Lawler. Wrestling him is like going to the dentist. You'd rather be doing anything else, but you have no choice."

Others who want Lawler's hide on their walls aren't interested in the sport. They want a very personal revenge. Ernie Ladd heads that list.

"When I get finished with him," Ladd has often said, "he'll look like a pretzel left in the rain. He once got me good. The snake snuck up behind me and cracked me across the back of my head. I was seeing stars as he kept on pounding me. To this day, I don't remember how I got out of being destroyed. My instinct for survival saved me when my brain could no

longer function.

"Well, my brain is functioning perfectly now. I have a lot to pay that rat back for. No way Lawler is going to survive another year. I'm going to use any and all means to rip him into small pieces. When I get through with him, he'll be unfit for any athletic competition. In fact, I'll probably feel obligated to buy him a bowl for begging."



Though his opponent is bleary and bloody, Lawler continues to smash his fist into the face of his defenseless foe. Is it any wonder why Lawler is despised throughout wrestling?

Other wrestlers wish Ladd the best of luck—unless they can get at Lawler first. Jerry's cheating has made him enemies all over the world. Though most complain about his sneak attacks, that's only the tip of the iceberg. Lawler's vast repertoire of dirty tricks has been responsible for some of the saddest moments in wrestling. Jerry has laughed when a wrestler he has maimed leaves the arena in tears, knowing he'll never compete in athletics again.

Wrestlers have become more and more wary around Lawler. However, Jerry has become more cunning. He's using his reprehensible skills better than ever. Someday, a wrestler may actually get revenge against Lawler. Of course, chances are better Lawler will get him first. □

BACK ISSUES OF

THE Wrestler

Don't miss a single issue of the magazine that has thrilled wrestling fans for two generations, **THE WRESTLER**. Complete your collection of the most respected wrestling publication in the world today. Supplies are limited. Don't delay—order today!

July 1986/Stories include: King Kong Bundy, Koloff vs. Graham, Ric Flair.

December 1986/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Bockwinkel, Gilbert, Nikita.

January 1987/Stories include: Heenan, Garvins, DiBiase, Borne & Sawyer.

May 1988/Stories include: Horsemen, Hogan, Flair, Fantastics, DiBiase.

February 1990/Stories include: Sting-Luger, Gordy, Martel, Hogan-Brown.

April 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Woman, Piper-Heenan, Travis.

June 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Rockers, Koloffs, Horsemen, Flair-Luger.

July 1990/Stories include: Poffo, Dusty-Savage, Luger-Flair, Doom, Blanchard.

September 1990/Stories include: Ultimate, Haynes, Luger, Doom, Tugboat.

October 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Ultimate, Flair, Rich.

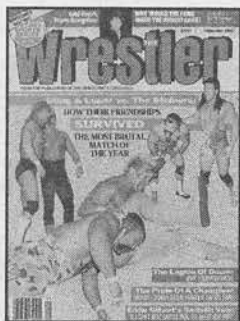
November 1990/Stories include: Luger & Sting, Beefcake, Race, Steiners.

May 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Slaughter, Flair, Eaton, Sheik-Bobo.

June 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Nastys, Sting, Flair, Cactus Jack.

July 1991/Stories include: Flair-Fujinami, Nastys, Steiners, Savage.

August 1991/Stories include: Slaughter, Luger-Nikita, Hennig, Poffo.



September 1991/Stories include: Steiners vs. Sting & Luger, LOD, Cactus.

November 1991/Stories include: Luger, Steamboat, Piper, Global.

January 1992/Stories include: LOD, Badd, Hughes, Roberts, Gossett.

February 1992/Stories include: Flair, Simmons, Santana, Backlund.

May 1992/Stories include: Flair, Anderson & Eaton, Piper, Rhodes, USWA.

June 1992/Stories include: Flair-Hogan-Justice, Gilbert, Warrior, Vegas.

August 1992/Stories include: Warrior, Bunkhouse, Undertaker-Roberts, Sting.

October 1992/Stories include: Bulldog & Warrior, Lee, Martel-Tatanka, Austin.

November 1992/Stories include: Crush, Reed, Hennig, Sting, Rogers.

April 1993/Stories include: What's in/out, Ramon, Steamboat, Patriot, Tatanka.

June 1993/Stories include: Sting-Vader, Doink & Christopher, Steiners, Lawler.

July 1993/Stories include: Smith-Vader, Ramon, Rhodes, Tatanka, Bravo murder.

November 1993/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Hogan, Luger, Jannetty, Bodies.

December 1993/Stories include: Luger, Sting & Flair, Fytch, Luna, Austin.

January 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Rude-Flair, Bagwell & Scorpio, Cornette.



February 1994/Stories include: Vicious & Arn, Yokozuna, Vader-Cactus, steroids.

April 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Savage-Crush, Flair, Blayze, Adams, Boss.

May 1994/Stories include: Royal Rumble, Hulk minus bulk, Boss, Douglas-Sherri.

July 1994/Stories include: Flair-Hogan, DiBiase, Crockett, Douglas, WWF.

August 1994/Stories include: Cactus-Vader, MOM, Hart & Yokozuna, Badd.

October 1994/Stories include: Undertaker, Cactus, Scorpio-Sabu, Funk, Sheik.

November 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Owen, Bret, Badd, Lawler.

December 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Vicious, Austin, Bomb.

January 1995/Stories include: Holiday gifts, DiBiase, Badd, Backlund, PG-13.

February 1995/Stories include: Hogan, Steiners, Undertaker, Sabu, Honky Tonk.

April 1995/Stories include: Harlem Heat, Lawler-Cornette, Beefcake, What If...?

May 1995/Stories include: Sting-Savage, Jarrett, Flair, Douglas-Blanchard.

July 1995/Stories include: Hogan, Jannetty, Pillman, LT, Dundee.

August 1995/Stories include: Diesel, LT, Hogan, powerful people, Gargyle.

October 1995/Stories include: Backlund, Steiners, Austin & Pillman, Miss Texas.

November 1995/Stories include: Flair-Savage, Mabel, Jarrett-Ramon, Renegade.

Winter 1995/Stories include: Sting-Hogan, Steiners, Yankem, Bodies, Arn.

January 1996/Stories include: Hogan, Douglas, anniversary review of 30 years.

February 1996/Stories include: Hart, Luger, WCW, Cactus, Horowitz.

THE WRESTLER

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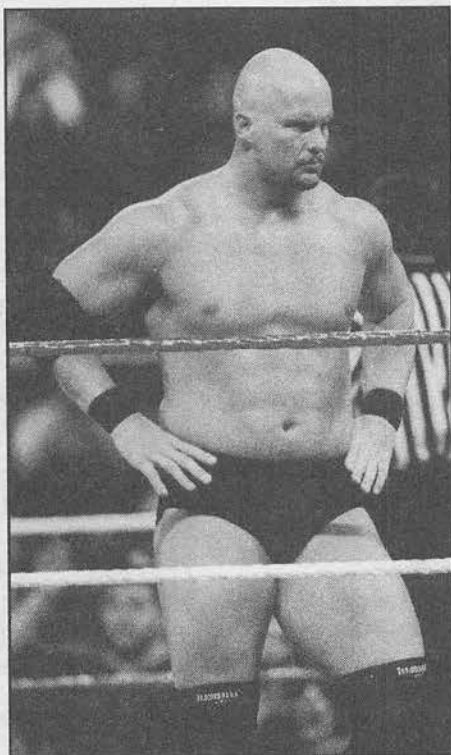
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Wrestler^{THE}

TOP 10

- 1 SHAWN MICHAELS**
234, San Antonio, TX
(1) WWF World champion
- 2 THE GIANT**
430, parts unknown
(2) WCW World champion
- 3 AHMED JOHNSON**
255, Pearl River, MS
(-) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 4 LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
(8) WCW TV champion
- 5 KONNAN**
237, Mexico City, Mexico
(5) U.S. heavyweight champion
- 6 STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Dallas, TX
(-) No. 4 contender: WWF World title
- 7 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
(3) No. 3 contender: WCW World title
- 8 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
273, Scottsdale, AZ
(4) No. 7 contender: WWF World title
- 9 JEFF JARRETT**
230, Nashville, TN
(7) USWA heavyweight champion
- 10 DAVEY BOY SMITH**
245, Leeds, England
(-) No. 2 contender: WWF World title



Steve Austin

TAG TEAMS

- 1 THE SMOKIN' GUNNS**
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(-) WWF World tag team champions
- 2 HARLEM HEAT**
Combined weight: 550 pounds
(-) WCW World tag team champions
- 3 SKIP & ZIP**
Combined weight: 446 pounds
(3) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 4 RICK & SCOTT STEINER**
Combined weight: 483 pounds
(5) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 5 LEX LUGER & STING**
Combined weight: 525 pounds
(2) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 6 HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN**
Combined weight: 531 pounds
(1) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 7 THE ELIMINATORS**
Combined weight: 459 pounds
(9) ECW tag team champions
- 8 THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS**
Combined weight: 453 pounds
(-) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 9 LEIF CASSIDY & MARTY JANNETTY**
Combined weight: 462 pounds
(-) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 10 FLEX KAVANA & BART SAWYER**
Combined weight: 503 pounds
(-) USWA tag team champions

WCW

World Champion:

THE GIANT

(C) 430, parts unknown

- 1-KONNAN**
(1) 237, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2-LEX LUGER**
(3) 265, Chicago, IL
- 3-STING**
(2) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 4-DEAN MALENKO**
(5) 216, Tampa, FL
- 5-RIC FLAIR**
(6) 243, Minneapolis, MN
- 6-CHRIS BENOIT**
(9) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 7-SCOTT STEINER**
(-) 235, Detroit, MI
- 8-ARN ANDERSON**
(8) 249, Minneapolis, MN
- 9-RANDY SAVAGE**
(4) 237, Sarasota, FL
- 10-DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**
(10) 260, Tampa, FL

WWF

World Champion:

SHAWN MICHAELS

(C) 234, San Antonio, TX

- 1-AHMED JOHNSON**
(7) 255, Pearl River, MS
- 2-DAVEY BOY SMITH**
(2) 245, Leeds, England
- 3-GOLDUST**
(1) 254, Austin, TX
- 4-STEVE AUSTIN**
(10) 241, Dallas, TX
- 5-BIG VAN VADER**
(6) 450, Denver, CO
- 6-MANKIND**
(-) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM
- 7-THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
(3) 273, Scottsdale, AZ
- 8-THE UNDERTAKER**
(4) 328, parts unknown
- 9-JAKE ROBERTS**
(-) 253, Stone Mountain, GA
- 10-SAVIO VEGA**
(8) 260, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico

USWA

USWA Champion:

JEFF JARRETT

(C) 230, Nashville, TN

- 1-BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
(5) 230, Memphis, TN
- 2-JERRY LAWLER**
(1) 234, Memphis, TN
- 3-DOUG GILBERT**
(8) 241, Lexington, TN
- 4-TOMMY RICH**
(-) 248, Hendersonville, TN
- 5-FLEX KAVANA**
(-) 272, Pearl City, HI
- 6-CYBERPUNK FIRE**
(9) 221, parts unknown
- 7-MO**
(7) 285, Harlem, NY
- 8-TONY FALK**
(6) 240, Dallas, TX
- 9-PUNISHER**
(-) 298, Atlanta, GA
- 10-BRICKHOUSE BROWN**
(-) 227, Tampa, FL

ECW

ECW Champion:

RAVEN

(C) 235, Short Hills, NJ

- 1-CHRIS JERICHO**
(2) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia
- 2-ROB VAN DAM**
(10) 227, Battle Creek, MI
- 3-PIT BULL II**
(-) 231, Philadelphia, PA
- 4-SHANE DOUGLAS**
(1) 223, Pittsburgh, PA
- 5-SABU**
(8) 220, Bombay
- 6-TOMMY DREAMER**
(6) 245, Yonkers, NY
- 7-BRIAN LEE**
(5) 251, Los Angeles, CA
- 8-TAZ**
(3) 221, Red Hook, NY
- 9-THE SANDMAN**
(7) 244, Philadelphia, PA
- 10-TERRY GORDY**
(-) 289, Chattanooga, TN

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

- 1 **SHAWN MICHAELS**
234, San Antonio, TX
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2 **STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular
- 3 **THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR**
273, Scottsdale, AZ
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular
- 4 **AHMED JOHNSON**
255, Pearl River, MS
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular
- 5 **THE UNDERTAKER**
328, parts unknown
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular
- 6 **LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular
- 7 **SAVIO VEGA**
260, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular
- 8 **KONNAN**
237, Mexico City, Mexico
Last issue: unrated
- 9 **YOKOZUNA**
589, Samoa
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular
- 10 **TOMMY DREAMER**
245, Yonkers, NY
Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular

MOST HATED

- 1 **DIESEL**
356, Las Vegas, NV
Last issue: unrated
- 2 **GOLDUST**
254, Austin, TX
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3 **STEVE MCMICHAEL**
270, Austin, TX
Last issue: unrated
- 4 **RAZOR RAMON**
290, Miami, FL
Last issue: unrated
- 5 **THE GIANT**
430, parts unknown
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated
- 6 **MANKIND**
277, Truth or Consequences, NM
Last issue: unrated
- 7 **RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated
- 8 **JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated
- 9 **STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Dallas, TX
Last issue: unrated
- 10 **DAVEY BOY SMITH**
245, Leeds, England
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated

For period ended June 27, 1996

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| 1—BRET HART | 58 points |
| 2—SHAWN MICHAELS | 56 points |
| 3—STING | 54 points |
| 4—THE UNDERTAKER | 46 points |
| 5—HULK HOGAN | 42 points |

TAG TEAMS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1—THE SMOKIN' GUNNS | 59 points |
| 2—SKIP & ZIP | 58 points |
| 3—HARLEM HEAT | 57 points |
| 4—LEX LUGER & STING | 53 points |
| 5—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN | 39 points |

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(C) 287, Gisu, Japan

- 1—**NOBUHIKO TAKADA**
(1) 231, Yokohama, Japan
- 2—**GREAT SASUKE**
(2) 212, Tokyo, Japan
- 3—**THE GREAT MUTA**
(4) 245, Tokyo, Japan
- 4—**JUSHIN LIGER**
(3) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
- 5—**HAKUSHI**
(5) 231, Tokyo, Japan
- 6—**MASA CHONO**
(6) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 7—**HIROYOSHI TENZAN**
(8) 270, Tokyo, Japan
- 8—**GENICHIRO TENRYU**
(7) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 9—**RIKI CHOSHU**
(9) 246, Yamaguchi, Japan
- 10—**KENSUKE SASAKI**
(-) 233, Tokyo, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
AKIRA TAUE
(2) 265, Tokyo, Japan

- 1—**MITSU HARU MISAWA**
(C) 228, Saitama, Japan
- 2—**KENTA KOBASHI**
(5) 261, Tokyo, Japan
- 3—**TOSHI AKI KAWADA**
(1) 245, Tizhigi, Japan
- 4—**YOSHINARI OGAWA**
(9) 202, Fichigi, Japan
- 5—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
(6) 265, Norman, OK
- 6—**STAN HANSEN**
(4) 322, Borger, TX
- 7—**GARY ALBRIGHT**
(8) 343, Billings, MT
- 8—**THE PATRIOT**
(7) 251, Columbia, SC
- 9—**JOHNNY ACE**
(3) 250, San Bernadino, CA
- 10—**DOUG FURNAS**
(10) 243, Commerce, OK

AAA: AAA Champion—Konnann; 1—Ray Misterio Jr.; 2—Juventud Guerrera; 3—Perra Aguayo; 4—Pscosis; 5—Heavy Metal; 6—Ultimo Dragon; 7—La Parka; 8—Zibernetico; 9—Pierroth Jr.; 10—KGB.

ACW: ACW Champion—T. Rantala; 1—Rick Martel; 2—Frank Stalletto; 3—Johnny Graham; 4—Johnny Gunn; 5—Lord Zoltan; 6—Brick Bronsky; 7—Tito Santana; 8—Reckless Youth; 9—Glen Osbourne; 10—Race Richards III.

CWA: CWA Champion—Kevin Sullivan; 1—Jimmy Snuka; 2—Vic Steamboat; 3—Hugh Morris; 4—Ace Darling; 5—Devon Storm; 6—Metal Maniac; 7—El Mascara; 8—Knuckles Nelson; 9—Inferno Kid; 10—Pink Assassin.

NAASW: NAASW Champion—Colorado Kid; 1—Justin St. John; 2—Ron McClarity; 3—Shaw Williams; 4—J.C. Ice; 5—Chris Graham; 6—Charlie Parker; 7—Man Mountain Mike; 8—Giant Warrior; 9—Reggie Montgomery; 10—Pink Phantom.

PCW: PCW Champion—Mark Mest; 1—Ray Odyssey; 2—Dr. Isaac Yankem; 3—Lance Diamond; 4—Cheetah Master; 5—King Kong Bundy; 6—Maxx Grimson; 7—Reckless Youth; 8—Jimmy Deo; 9—Ace Darling; 10—D.Z. Gillespie.

PWA: PWA Champion—The Hater; 1—Lenny Lane; 2—Wellington Wilkinson; 3—Horace the Psychopath; 4—J.B. Trask; 5—Charlie Norris; 6—Blacktop Bully; 7—Tom Zenk; 8—Nailz; 9—Sam Houston; 10—Dan Jesser.

PWF: PWF Champion—Carolina Dreamer; 1—Italian Stallion; 2—George South; 3—Austin Steele; 4—Flaming Youth; 5—Russian Assassin II; 6—Cruel Connection II; 7—Terry Austin; 8—Chris Hamrick; 9—Star Ryder; 10—Gladiator II.

WWA: WWA Champion—Jim McPherson; 1—King Kong Bundy; 2—Rodney Farr; 3—Jimmy Snuka; 4—Icon; 5—Metal Maniac; 6—Bud Licious; 7—Chuck Sloan; 8—Stryker; 9—Tricky Nicky; 10—Pat the Crippler.

Ratings

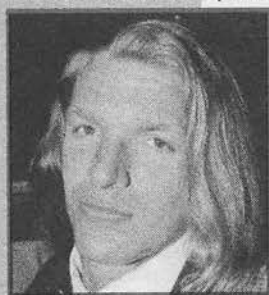
ANALYSIS

Goodbye and hello. You've read the story on page 42. You know all about the defections of Diesel and Razor Ramon from the WWF to WCW. Obviously, they have both dropped out of the WWF ratings completely, but since neither had wrestled in WCW as of press time, neither man makes the WCW ratings this month.

That will change soon, though. And don't be surprised if both men end up back in the Most Hated rankings, too. Ramon hardly resembled the fan favorite the fans in the WWF loved during the last three years of his WWF tenure. Upon arriving in WCW on Memorial Day, he ripped **Eric Bischoff** and was booed by most of the fans.

Diesel acted like a bitter, spiteful man during his last few months in the WWF and wasn't above insulting anyone. He said that was the real "Big Daddy Cool," too, and accused the higher-ups at the WWF of trying to make him into a nicer, more gentle man when he held the WWF World title. We expect him to be just as nasty and vicious once he starts wrestling in WCW.

A question that some WWF fans might want to ask is this: Who in the WWF now benefits most from the departures of Razor and Diesel? A lot of people could. There are plenty of very talented wrestlers in



Hunter Hearst Helmsley

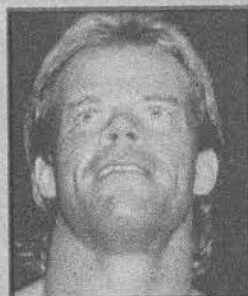
the WWF right now who could get a chance to move toward main event status.

How about **Savio Vega**, **Marc Mero**, **Steve Austin**, and **Hunter Hearst Helmsley**, just to name a few? Vega has come very close to winning the Intercontinental title several times and now that he holds several victories over Austin, he could be in line for more title shots.

Mero and Austin both won titles in WCW and keep getting better and better with each match. And Helmsley, though he has struggled in the last six months, might finally get his chance to shine. He did defeat Ramon several times just prior to Razor's departure from the WWF, so it might just be a matter of him building up some more confidence in himself.

Tag team confusion. Approximately one year ago, we were really coming down hard on both

WCW and the WWF for not taking it upon themselves to improve their tag team rosters. We're not doing that anymore. WCW has so many good teams now—**Sting** and **Lex Luger**, **The Road Warriors**, **Rick and Scott Steiner**, **Harlem Heat**, **The Nasty Boys**, and **Public Enemy**, to name a half-dozen, and the WWF has **The Smokin'**



Lex Luger

Gunns, **The Bodydonnas** (**Skip** and **Zip**), **Henry** and **Phineas Godwinn**, **The Bushwhackers**, and **The New Rockers** (**Leif Cassidy** and **Marty Jannetty**).

If you look at the situation objectively, you'd have to say WCW has the stronger roster from top to bottom, yet many fans have written to ask us why the Godwinns and Bodydonnas have often occupied the top slot in our tag team ratings, ahead of Sting and Luger, The Road Warriors, and the Steiners.

The answer is actually quite simple: We usually reserve the top two spots in our tag team ratings for the WCW and WWF world tag team champions (not necessarily in that order) ... unless one or both teams gives us a good reason to rank them lower.

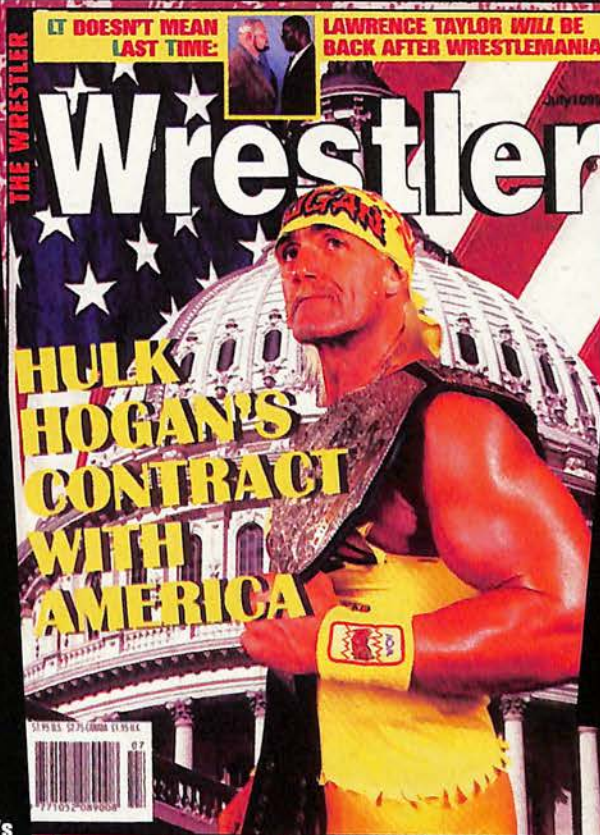
Sting and Luger have given us reason to do just that. As WCW tag team champs, they have often gone several weeks without defending their belts at all. Sometimes they team with other people, and sometimes they focus on their solo careers (Luger is also the WCW TV champ), but if they're not defending the belts, they shouldn't be ranked too high. In fact, in several issues of *PWI Weekly*, we didn't list Sting and Luger at all in our tag team ratings.

Say what you will about the skills of the Godwinns, Bodydonnas, and Gunns, but when they have held the belts, they have always defended them regularly. And remember that none of our ratings is based purely on skill. In other words, we're not necessarily saying the Godwinns are better than the Steiners or could beat them if the two teams wrestled each other. □

Until next month ... As always if you have any questions or comments regarding our ratings in general or what you see in this column, we'd love to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

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